

CENTER FOR COGNITIVE SCIENCE

University at Buffalo, State University of New York

Wednesday, November 6, 2002

280 Park Hall

North Campus

2:00 pm –4:00 pm

“SNAP and SPAN”

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Many philosophers believe that truth is to be understood in terms of a relation between true sentences, on the one hand, and facts or states of affairs in the world, on the other. The latter are the truthmakers for the former. But consider the sentence: "John has been located in Atlanta for 35 years." What is it, in the world, which makes this sentence true?

Well, perhaps some complex whole involving John, Atlanta, and a location relation stretching across 35 years. But John has exchanged all the molecules in his body many times in this 35 year period, and Atlanta may well have exchanged all its buildings. What, then, are the bearers of the location relation in the given case? I will argue that the impossibility of providing an answer to this question demands an overhaul of our common conceptions of language and ontology. Briefly: that nouns and verbs are in order as they stand (as, in the medical domain, anatomy and physiology are in order as they stand), but that the sentence is marked by the ontological equivalent of original sin.

**Refreshments will be available
Everyone is welcome!**

For information please call the Cognitive Science Office at (716) 645-3794 or check
<http://wings.buffalo.edu/cogsci/html/2002spring.htm>