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CAMERA SCRIPT

WEDNESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 1973

ALEXANDRA PALACE - STUDIO 'A'

PROJECT NO.: 00525/3027

RECORDING NO.: VTM/6HT/70951

O.U. REF.: A.303/3

OPEN UNIVERSITY - PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY
WHAT IS TRUTH?

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER.....PETER SCROGGS
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CREW.....TWO
MAKE-UP ASSISTANT.....PAULINE COX

TAKING PART

PROFESSOR PETER F. STRAWSON
MR. GARETH EVANS
MRS. SUSAN WILSON (OU)

SCHEDULE

CAMERA REHEARSAL.....1100-1300
TELECINE.....1100-1715
Lunch.....1300-1400
Line-up.....1400-1430
RECORDING (Discontinuous).....1430-1545 (VTM/6HT/70951)
Tea break.....1545-1615
RECORDING contd.....1615-1715

Photocall 1200

ALSO RECORD opening titles (TK) on end for A.303/8 (Richard Callanan)

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

CAMERA 1: Pedestal - zoom

CAMERA 2: " - "

CAMERA 3: " - "

MICS: 3 x 451

Tape ($\frac{1}{4}$ x 7" spool)

Floor monitors

TELECINE: 16mm from 1100 (mute)

VT playback facilities 1430-1715 (no inserts)

TELEJECTOR SLIDES

<u>NO.</u>	<u>SHOT</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
1.	3	TRUTH
2.	4	Introduced by Susan Wilson Lecturer in Philosophy
3.	6	WHAT IS TRUTH?
4.	7	A discussion between PETER F. STRAWSON Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy University of Oxford and GARETH EVANS Fellow and Praelector in Philosophy University College, Oxford.
5.	8	Professor Peter Strawson - (ident)
6.	9	Gareth Evans - (ident)
7.	10	Taking part were PROFESSOR PETER F. STRAWSON GARETH EVANS SUSAN WILSON
8.	10	Production Patricia Hodgson
9.	10	A production for The Open University BBC-tv (c) The Open University 1973

RUNNING ORDER

SHOT	PAGE	DESCRIPTION	CAMS	TIMINGS
2.	1	TK.1: Open. titles	-	
3.- 4.	1	TJs1-2: Titles cont.	-	
5.	1- 2	WILSON: Intro.	2	
6.- 7.	2	TJs3-4: Discussion ident.	-	
8.- 9.	2- 3	2-WAY DISC: Pt. I STRAWSON/EVANS TJs5-6	3 1	
AS DIR.	3- 4	2-WAY DISC: Pt. II STRAWSON/EVANS	1 2 3	
AS DIR.	4- 6	Pt. III	1 2 3	
AS DIR.	6- 8	Pt. IV	1 2 3	
10.	8	TJs7-9: End credits	-	

F/U

S/B TK

- 1. A
VT CLOCK

RUN TK

- 2. TK.1 (Dur: 15") MUTE
Film: Opening titles

- 3. TJ.1
"TRUTH"

- 4. TJ.2
"Introduced by Susan Wilson
Lecturer in Philosophy"

- 5. 2 B SUSAN WILSON: When a philosopher asks the
MS WILSON question, "What is truth?" we need to know
what sort of an answer he would count as
satisfactory. The two philosophers you're
now going to hear are engaged in a search
for an answer which does at least two
things: first, it must show what all the
statements we call true have in common, so
that we can explain why we apply the same
word to many different kinds of statement;

(TJ NEXT)

(SHOT 5, on 2)

WILSON contd: and second, it must show what the relations between different kinds of true statement are. To discuss the question "What is truth?" I have invited Peter Strawson, Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy at Oxford, and Gareth Evans, Fellow of University College, Oxford,

6. TJ.3
"WHAT IS TRUTH?"

7. TJ.4
"A discussion between..."

8. 3 A /PROF. STRAWSON:
2-S favouring STRAWSON

S/I
TJ.5
"Prof. Peter Strawson(ident)
T/O

2 to A

(I) (a) Ramsey is a convenient starting point for discussing problems associated with attempts to define truth. Problems are not about truth but only about beliefs or assertions. Something is true if, and only if, things are as the person who holds the belief thinks. e.g. Austin - it takes two to make a truth.

ZOOM IN to MS Strawson

(b) Systematic semantics
The problem of the statements or assertions might be tackled through a mastery of linguistic conventions. But the outcome of such investigations cannot be called truth. Any definition of truth arrived at

(1 NEXT)

(SHOT 8, on 3)

STRAWSON contd: a la Tarski is relative to language; e.g. it is a definition of English rather than truth.

9. 1 A MS EVANS / EVANS: Concedes language relativity point.
 S/I
 TJ.6
 T/O "Gareth Evans"(ident)

But this might be avoided by using labels for relevant parts of sentences that could be applicable across languages; e.g. (gives example).
 Explain: Name + Predicate is true if, and only if, the item named satisfies the predicate.
 (further example)

AS DIRECTED:

- 1 A MS, MCU, CU EVANS
2-Ss
- 2 A 2-Ss
- 3 A MS, MCU, CU STRAWSON
2-Ss

2-WAY DISCUSSION - PLAN AS FOLLOWS:

STRAWSON: Of course truth has generality across statement forms. A group of statement forms and their relations is an important part of understanding the notion of truth.

(II) 'Realist' definition of Ramsey.

EVANS: Ramsey's formula may be seen in its thinnest form and is utterly applicable. (gives example).
 But is not Strawson saying more and

(AS DIRECTED)

(AS DIRECTED)

EVANS contd: stressing things in the world that a reference is not just casually true. There must be something in the world.

STRAWSON: Asks for development of implied criticism.

(III) Objections to the 'realist' version of Ramsey.

EVANS: There are cases where people say something is true when they are not saying something about the world.

(Morals example)

(Mathematical example)

These statements are true and on the thinnest interpretation of Ramsey fit the formula. But not clear what conditions are necessary in the world for them to be true in a realistic interpretation of Ramsey. We have an intuitive understanding of statements asserting conditions on the world but can we give a sensible account of how moral statements etc. relate to the world? e.g. Do they describe atoms in

(AS DIRECTED)

(AS DIRECTED)

EVANS contd: a particular configuration?

STRAWSON: Not quite....

But they relate to material bodies and their parts standing in certain relations to each other and certain states of mind of people in the world. Some people have re-classified statements in morals, maths, etc. as rules or imperatives to avoid calling them strictly true or false. Strength of realist view. P.F.S. accepts.it.

EVANS: Admits the power of the connection between truth and the way the world is, but argues that perhaps it should be severed. The realist must give some explanation of why we think of mathematical and moral statements as truths as use them as such.

STRAWSON: Things which aren't true in the primary sense are nevertheless backed by things that are and which provide the acceptability of such derivative

(AS DIRECTED)

(AS DIRECTED)

STRAWSON contd: statements.

(gives example)

EVANS. This is not enough. Advice may be acceptable because of the way things are in the world but we don't call advice true.

(IV) STRAWSON:

Derivative truths may be linked to the 'realist' Ramsey formula.

Agrees to expand.

e.g. maths.

Truths of maths are intertwined in a special way with ordinary (realistic) beliefs about the world.

e.g. counting operations: $7 + 5 = 12$.

A counting operation has empirical truth in the world. It can also be a formula to help us use experience. The acceptability of the formula is related to its use in the world. This is the explanation for mathematical statements. There may be another account of moral statements.

EVANS: Criticises the maths example.

(AS DIRECTED)

(AS DIRECTED)

EVANS contd: Doesn't explain why we call more complex mathematical discoveries truths.
e.g. Goedel's incompleteness theorem, etc.

STRAWSON: True. But maths acquires its own autonomy and internal criteria of acceptability as it gets more remote from the world. This doesn't mean we have to cut the explanatory link with empirical truth.

EVNAS: Accepts that P.F.S. is serious about realism. But there are lots of problems about the status of derivative truths. The theory of truth isn't the place to reflect these distinctions. Surely P.F.S.'s account of Truth is insufficiently general? I want truth to be constant and general through any typology of statement forms - moral, definitional, aesthetic.

Explain this again. NB

STRAWSON: Attacks G.E. for demanding an undifferentiated theory of truth. Doesn't

(AS DIRECTED)

STRAWSON contd: this tend to extend the notion of the world to include a realm of theoretical mathematical entities in a relation which the truths of maths faithfully mirror?

EVANS: Objects.

This is a temptation which shows the power of the picture, but I'm not committed to it.

STRAWSON: Grants that 'true' has a wide range of applications. Starts from the realist view and tries to extend explanation to other cases. Attacks G.E. on ground that he has not attained this range of explanation. He is relying on a grammatical feature as the common link.

EVANS: Admits he cannot rely on grammatical mood. Suggests directions for resolving problems.
e.g. belief versus action.

10. TJ.7
"Taking part were..."

TJ.8
"Production Patricia Hodgson"

TJ.9
"A production for..."

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A303/3

MS

PROGRAMME TRANSCRIPT.

A-303-3

OPEN UNIVERSITY - ARTS

PROJECT NO: 00525/3027

'WHAT IS TRUTH?'

SUSAN WILSON: When the philosopher asks the question 'What is truth?' we need to know what would count as a satisfactory answer. The two philosophers you're now going to hear are looking for an answer which will do at least two things. First, it must show what all true statements have in common. The reason why you want to know this is because we want to explain why it is that we apply the same word 'true' to many different kinds of statement. We want to show how all true statements resemble each other. But if we want to give a complete account of this we also need to show how different kinds of true statement are related to each other and this is the second thing that we demand of a satisfactory account of truth. We want to show both how true statements resemble each other and how they differ. Here now to discuss such an account of truth are P.S. Strawson of Magdalen College Oxford and Gareth Evans of University College, Oxford.

PROF. STAWSON: Well, some 50 years ago, as you know, of course, Frank Ramsey said that there was no serious problem about the general nature of truth, though, of course, there were problems about the nature of statement or assertion, and the nature of belief. I think that inspite of all that's happened in the intervening time, I think Ramsey was right. The question what it is for a statement to be true or a belief to be true, really admits of a simple answer and the answer is this, that er, a statement is true if, and only if, things are as one who makes that statement thereby states them to be. And the belief is true if, and only if, things are as one who holds that belief thereby believes them to be. Now this rather trivial sounding formula has two great merits. Er, for one thing it admits of as many specific applications as you please. And, again, n the other hand, it makes the point which Austen I think, expressed by saying it takes two to make a truth. Er, for example, suppose someone says or believes that er, Caesar was bald, then what he says or what he believes is true if, and only if, Caesar was indeed bald. And here we have this twofold reference, reference on the one hand to er, a believing or a saying, on the other hand to that in the world which the statement is about, or the belief is about.

STRAWSON: Twofold reference to the thought on the one hand and the world on the other and any adequate account of truth must allow for that. But now, as I said at the beginning, Ramsey did acknowledge that there were plenty of problems in the vicinity which weren't so simply dealt with and one of these was the problem of the nature of assertion. And I suppose one might regard current investigations into systematic semantics as an attack on this er, problem. That's to say, this is an investigation into the nature of those linguistic conventions er, in virtue of mastery of which we're able to say and to understand the true of false things that we do say or understand. Now what I regard as misleading, is to call the outcome of these investigations, a definition of truth as is fashionably done. Er, for example, if somebody er, comes up with a systematic semantics for English which nobody of course has in fact yet done, then it would be in this fashion to say that he's defined truth for English, or defined true in English. But of course, there isn't one concept of truth for English another for French another for Swahili and so on, there's just truth. Er, if the semantic theorist is said to have defined anything, then.... that is to say that er, he's defined English, rather than he's defined truth.

EVANS: Well, I think on their behalf I would concede that. It seems to me that um, the concept of truth has an application across languages. It has a wider range of extension than any of the terms they define. I wonder perhaps, slightly parenthetically, I wonder whether one can't however get some illumination from their ideas from a Tarskian style treatment, by trying to identify er, grammatical categories which are common to many languages, such as name and predicate, er, conjunction, negation and so on, and try and divide truth recursively um, something along the following line. One might say, you take the basic set of sentences which will be let us say, names coupled with predicates and we say that such a sentence of this kind is true if the item named by the name satisfied the predicate or the predicate applies to it. And then, for more complicated sentences, say a negation, a sentence which consists of another sentence, with a negation sign, is true just in case that other sentence is not true. And so on, with conjunction and the other devices of sentential composition. Er, I mean, it must be said that such a general application of this idea relies upon a primitive notion of naming, as I used it, and of satisfaction of predicates, but don't you think it gives us some illumination?

STRAWSON: Well, I think it's an improvement on the language relative, er, notion of truth, but I still think that er, the concept of truth has a generality which transcends, goes beyond this typology of statement forms just as much as it transcends differences of language. However, I think, in my turn I might make a concessive move here, and say that that title, theory of truth might well be allowed to include under it, er, this sort of investigation of general statement forms common to all languages and their relations. And I think this for two reasons. First of all, it seems clear that er, if it were not for language, and the variety of statement forms that make up all languages, if it were not for language, truth really wouldn't amount to very much and indeed nor would thought amount to very much. Er, and the other reason, which is a more frivolous one perhaps, is that after all we have this grand title, 'Theory of Truth' and it seems rather a pity to confine it to the rather insubstantial er, Ramseyian formula.

EVANS: Well, very well, let's look at the possibility. We both agree we want a general account of truth and let's look as if this Ramsey formula er, that's to say the formula he said something true just in case things are as he stated them to be, does in fact capture this.

EVANS contd: Now it seems to me there is a thin interpretation of this formula, er, which does. We understand this idea of things being in the world as someone states them to be, as a sort of general statement which we understand from many particular instances of the following form. He said that snow is white, and snow is white, He said that grass is green, and grass is green: i.e. understand that so long as there is a filling that we can put. He said that p and p, in that scheme and to yield a truth, things are as he stated them to be, and that seems to me what I shall call thin, the thin interpretation it does seem to me that's utterly general. But there is a more substantial er, interpretation which I can call a realist interpretation which puts more weight upon the idea of things in the world being in such and such a condition. And it seems if we do put the weight upon that it might not have the generality, the formula might not have the generality that it ought to have.

STRAWSON: Could you say a bit more what you have in mind?

EVANS: Well, of course this idea of things in the world being in such and such a condition is not the most perspicuous of notions - I mean is it, one might ask, perhaps the distribution of elementary particles and their organisation and location and so on but in so far as one has a grip upon the idea, it seems difficult to find things in the world which would make say, mathematical statements true, or maybe some logical truths true. Um, it seems that these, moral statements too, the mathematical statements are difficult because it doesn't seem that they are things, er, whose relations and dispositions make 2 and 2 plus 4 true...um, 2 plus 2 equals 4 true. Um, and in the case of their moral statement, John ought to look after his mother, er, it isn't that there's any lack of things, John and his mother are certainly there, but it's difficult to see in virtue of what relationship er, if one takes a realistic idea of this, in virtue of what relation they must stand for the statement to be true.

STRAWSON: Well, two things here. Er, first to raise the question about the condition of things in the world or facts about the world, just how extensive is this, and you mentioned the relation of elementary particles?

STRAWSON Contd: Well, I think we can construe it a little, indeed a great deal more broadly than that, er, I think it might be allowed to cover er, facts about the disposition and relation of er, gross bodies of ordinary physical bodies, facts about their sensible qualities. We had facts about people's states of mind. We had facts about social institutions and the rules that are accepted in them, or that constitute them, and the degree to which people's behaviour er, represents compliance with these rules and failure to comply with them. We really have an enormous range of er, types of fact which fairly clearly fall under the rubric er, facts about the world. Statements or descriptions of how things are in the world this crucial phrase. However, I must concede that um, though we can make this a very extensive range of facts, er, it's not so easy to include in it er, mathematical facts as we are prone to call them, or the facts, if that's the right word, expressed by moral judgements, but isn't it worth remarking that um, philosophers precisely sensitive to the importance in this connection of the notion of condition of things in the world, or facts about the world, have been prone to reclassify er, mathematical formulae and moral judgements er, to refrain from calling them statements in the strict sense?

STRAWSON contd: They've been inclined to reclassify them, to count say moral judgements to assimilate them, to imperatives as Professor Hare notably does, and to treat um, mathematical formulae, logical truths perhaps, with rules to assimilate those two rules.

EVANS: Yes, but er, their propensity to do this illustrates, it seems to me, the power of this connection - the connection between truth and er, things in the world having to be in such and such a condition. But um, I mean, this does seem to me an unacceptable consequence that we deprive these of er, appropriate bearers of truth and falsity. Er, and they're not statements and er, I mean, I do put it as a virtue of this very thin interpretation of the Ramsey formula, that each of these fit. I mean, he said that 2 plus 2 equals 4, and 2 plus 2 does indeed equal 4.

STRAWSON: Well, now, how about this. Er, couldn't one say that um, truth in the primary sense is as conceived in the realist interpretation.

STRAWSON contd: Er, the one which puts er, the weight does put on facts about the world, the way things are in the world. This is truth in the primary sense er, one who says something true in this sense says how things are in the world and what he says is true because things are in the world as he says they are, but what we do and intelligibly do, is to extend the word true, the notion of truth, and apply it to other utterances which play a different role in our lives from that of stating or purporting to state how things are in the world and we do this because the acceptability of those utterances depends on the truth of other things which are true in a primary sense. So there's a kind of dependence of things which we call true in this extended sense on truth in the primary sense.

EVANS: Well, I see the programme, I see the idea of, of this extension but you'll have to refine it, won't you, because there are a large range of things which we judge to be acceptable on the basis of truth in the primary sense which you.. I don't think even you would want to call true, such things as giving advice and commands.

EVANS contd: I mean, in these we are..
we do evaluate er, in the way you suggest.

STRAWSON: Yes, that's quite right, of course,
and so I put it, er, wrongly or insufficiently
clearly. Let me try again. Er, let's take
a mathematical formula, simple one like er,
7 plus 5 equals 12. Now it's quite clear
that this doesn't state how things are in the
world. Er, more specifically it doesn't state
er, what the results are of certain sorts of
counting operations. For example, you might
er, count one group of sheep and another
group of sheep separately and then count all
of the sheep together and if you do so you
will characteristically come up with a
certain result. Er, now it's certainly
true that 7 plus 5 equals 12 doesn't state
what this result is. But the fact is that
counting operations of this sort, not just
on sheep but on the millions of types of
things, do regularly and characteristically
have a certain outcome. This is a fact
about the world. Right? And because of
this fact about the world the mathematical
formulae and formulae of that sort have a

STRAWSON contd: certain utility for us, which they wouldn't have if these facts didn't hold - they enable us perhaps to calculate how many sheep there are in a certain field. They enable us to get from er, one set of truths about the world to another set of truths about the world and in this way they enter into are entwined er, with other elements in our total belief system. I mean, arithmetic, simple arithmetic cannot by itself er, tell us, tell me, how much er, money I have in my bank account, but it can certainly help to work out how much money I've got in my bank account.

EVANS: Simple arithmetic may be um, I can see that this account may work for it, but mathematics can get quite refined. Er, we have propositions about the irrational numbers, about non-denumerable infinitives, and er, the same pure logic, we have er, we have propositions such as Goedel's incompleteness theorem. It's very difficult to see how quite these can be regarded as intertwined in that way.

STRAWSON: OK, so one has to admit that mathematics develops a sort of autonomy that er, it develops its own criteria of acceptability, its own procedures of proof and so forth. But this doesn't show that the links that I want to emphasise are severed. The links are still there, they're just less direct in cases like this. Of course, there's no very straightforward application of highly sophisticated mathematics to the way things are in the world in the way I illustrated in the case of um, in the case of a simple arithmetical formula, er, but though the links are less direct the links are still there.

EVANS: Mm, well, I agree/^{again}there are these differences. I can see the difference between mm, demarcations to be made between fact stating discourses in some primitive prior sense and er, the mathematical discoveries. And not only do I see that these will be distinguished I can see an order of development. I can see that the order indeed you see, but it doesn't seem to me that the account of truth, the theory of truth is the place to reflect these differences.

EVANS contd: It seems to me that um, er, that we want an undifferentiated concept. You remember you wanted and you charged Tarski and others of systematic semanticism?, you wanted an undifferentiated concept of truth which applied on the one hand, of course, languages, and within a language across different statement forms. Well, I want an undifferentiated notion of truth which applies across er, different statement contents.

STRAWSON: I see. But that is what happens or what can happen er, when somebody's devoted to your undifferentiated concept of truth. Er, for example, instead of being prepared to accept my primary truth and secondary extensions, er, for example, in mathematics, er, what typically happens for somebody wedded to the notion of undifferentiated truth is that he, as it were, extends his notion of the world to keep pace with the undifferentiated notion of truth. Thus he tends to invent or imagine a realm of timeless perfect mutable mathematical objects, the relations between which are

STRAWSON contd: reflected or mirrored in the truths of mathematics. What you get is in fact er, platonism in mathematics, an extension of the world to run along with mathematical truth and indeed you get er, the same sort of thing though we haven't talked about this, in morality.

EVANS: You mean the sort of non-natural qualities that Maude talks about?

STRAWSON: Non-natural qualities, exactly.

EVANS: Yes. But of course the undifferentiated notion of truth leads to these excesses - and I agree with you, that they are excesses - only if it's a realistic one. It seems to me that's one of the great merits of the er, the thin interpretation that I've given of the Ramsey formula. That we can have an undifferentiated notion of truth which doesn't have this consequence. We don't need objects whose states and relations are true in virtue of.

STRAWSON: Ah, I see. You wish to change the undifferentiated er, version of truth

STRAWSON contd: but reject any extensions
of

EVANS: Of the world.

STRAWSON: the realistic picture that goes
along with it.

EVANS: Well, exactly, yes.

STRAWSON: Yes. Well, now let's see. There
are two things it seems to me that we can
agree about. First of all we can agree about
the coverage of the expression 'true' and of
the notion of truth. That's to say we can
agree the word is used and correctly used
not only of the *er*, honest to goodness
empirical truths which reflect the way things
are in the world, but also has this further
extension to cover mathematics, moral
judgements, logic and so forth. That we
can agree on. And it seems to me there's
something else that we ought at any rate to
agree on, mainly that this *er*, extensive
coverage of the notion of truth is something
that calls for explanation. Now it seems to
me that *er*, the notion I sketched, at least

STRAWSON contd: provides the pattern of an explanation. That's to say the notion of primary truth, er, which is a matter of reflecting the way things are in the world and then an explanation on the basis of this of how we come to extend the notion into these other fields. Here is not a full explanation but at least the pattern, the project of an explanation but er, it doesn't seem to me that you er, have offered one.

EVANS: No, no, I haven't and I'm not in a position to do so. Er, that's to say the demarcation of the class truth bearing utterances or truth or falsity bearing utterances. Um, I offer this just tentatively. I mean we do, the formula itself you said that p and p does impose a certain grammatical restriction, doesn't it? I mean, we can't get, he said that close the door and close the door. And so that's going to, going to do some of the work for us.

STRAWSON: Well, yes, but the work that this grammatical test does, is a work of demarcation and not a work of explanation.

STRAWSON contd: Incidentally, it doesn't er, even do the demarcation quite right, because we er, there are typical construction like the er, the future indicative in English for example, which would pass your grammatical test in that sentences in this tense and mood are often used for giving of orders, for example. Er...

EVANS: What?....

STRAWSON: Well, you've tried this in the army orders, company orders, a company will parade at 10.30 tomorrow morning. This isn't something up for assessment, er, as true or false.

EVANS: It's not true if they do...

STRAWSON: Well....as on the board there it's an order, and not a prediction er, so the grammatical test for one thing er, doesn't demarcate quite right. That seems to me trivial er, more important that, is the point, that at best you get a demarcation of the class of er, things that are true or false and not an explanation/^{of the extension} of the coverage, the range of that class.

EVANS: Well the only deeper er, suggestion I can make, I can see that, I mean, in a way one's got, one could put a point by saying how difficult it would be to identify the appropriate grammatical forms in a totally alien language for example. One would have to look at....

STRAWSON: Right. Right.

EVANS: No, the only suggestion I can make is and it's a gesture in the direction of believing the idea, that's to say that anything ^{or false} appropriately regarded as true/is a proper object of belief, and indeed this might be used to distinguish assertions in a complicated way from commands.

STRAWSON: Well, I think that's better in that it's not something purely formal, purely grammatical. The idea is that the things which are true or false are proper objects of belief. My worry, there, is whether the obscurity doesn't, which surrounds the notion of the coverage of true or false doesn't extend also to the notion of the coverage of belief and I think the current

STRAWSON contd: tendency to associate the belief with action would not yield you an answer here. But what would lead you to an answer very probably is something we haven't time to discuss.