

[coulw9.001. Tr: BJF. 31 August 90: edited version] Transcription conventions can be found on the last 2-3 pages of each transcript.

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WITTGENSTEIN AND ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

Meeting 9.: 2 April 87

TOPIC: 'THOUGHT' and 'THINKING'

Jeff Coulter: I thought it was about time to get into some detail on a particular bit of conceptual analysis out of Wittgenstein, though we've done bits and pieces of this before. So, what I thought I'd do was to talk for about an hour on 'thinking' and 'thoughts', and see how far we could push all that, and then take some discussion afterwards.

My text for today is paragraph 330. of the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS [Tr: abbreviated hereafter as PI], which I'll bounce off from. Wittgenstein actually has somewhat more to say about 'thought' than he does about 'thinking', and I'll try to talk a bit about both. Let's just read that through.

330. Is thinking a kind of speaking? One would like to say it is what distinguishes speech with thought from talking without thinking. - And so it seems to be an accompaniment of speech. A process, which may accompany

something else, or can go on by itself.

Say: "Yes, this pen is blunt. Oh well, it'll do." First, thinking it; then without thought; then just think the thought without the words. [Tr: PI, paragraph 330]

Well, what does that latter possibility amount to? I mean you can think it - I've just done it - and so can you. That's thinking it. "Then without thought", so you say mechanically, without any simultaneously silent soliloquy, "Yes, this pen is blunt. Oh well, it'll do." without thought. "Then just think the thought without the words", and that sounds like an impossibility. But then he goes on:

- Well, while doing some writing I might test the point of my pen, make a face - and then go on with a gesture of resignation. - I might also act in such a way while taking various measurements that an on-looker would say I had - without words - thought: If two magnitudes are equal to a third, they are equal to one another. - But what constitutes thought here is not some process which has to accompany the words if they are not to be spoken without thought. [Tr: PI, paragraph 330]

So I take it that what he's saying there, he's beginning to unravel, deconstruct - however you want to say it - the temptation that he has had, obviously, and that many people can have, and that you still find people succumbing to when they give rough and ready accounts of what the concept of 'thinking' means, the temptation to imagine that 'thinking' is, first of all, something that is done in the head, and that 'thinking' requires that you do it with words. Now, remember the analysis of "family resemblances" is applied to the concept of 'thinking' in the BLUE AND BROWN BOOKS, as well as other psychological constructs: 'expecting', 'understanding'. By the way, the family resemblance analysis of 'understanding' is withdrawn in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS in favor of the 'ability' analysis. But 'thinking' is indeed for Wittgenstein is more maintained as a polymorph. That is to say, it's a concept that ranges over a variety of quite different cases, between which there may be nothing common to all and only all of those cases we may refer to using the notion of 'thinking'. And here what he wants

us to do is imagine this scenario in which you see somebody using a pen, testing the nib, looking at it, and then going on like that, as indeed embodying what could otherwise be discursively rendered as "Yes, this pen is blunt. Oh well, it'll do.". And one might say of that individual "Well, he's been thinking the thing is blunt, but then he figured that he'll carry on". And indeed what you have is this display. Of course it has to be in an appropriate kind of context - always - because exactly that same display might elsewhere amount to the ascribability of wholly different sorts of things.

Ok, but the point of it is to propose that you can assign 'thinking' to persons, indeed quite explicit kinds of discursively representable thoughts, on the basis of what they can be seen to be doing in a given context. And it's just a way to begin to loosen us up in regard to the analysis of the concept of 'thinking'. Because what he's trying to free us from is temptation to assimilate 'thinking' to a unitary kind of phenomenon, namely, a MENTAL process that takes place in the head.

I'm not going to get much into Wittgenstein's refutation of the equation of meaning something with thinking it, though you can find that done in THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MIND in the chapter on 'thinking' and 'thoughts', which is just like a set of footnotes to Wittgenstein's own analysis.

What I want to focus upon are some of the pointed aspects of his analysis of the concept of 'thinking', and the concept of 'thought', and of 'having a thought', that bear upon topics of interest in the Behavioral Sciences.

All right. 'Thinking', then, is a family resemblance concept that covers a variety of things, and among those things it can cover may INDEED BE something like a mental process. And I suppose the characteristic sort of mental process that one associates, or one connects with the concept of 'thinking' is something like a bunch of meaningful words going through your head, going through the mind. And indeed it's not that Wittgenstein denies that we very often can think silent thoughts using a language. But, of course, unless we have already acquired a sufficient amount of the language, we can't have silent thoughts in the language. And kind of an area of Wittgenstein's discussion is quite similar to George Herbert Mead, in certain respects.

But what he wants to do is to propose that the concept of 'thinking' is not reducible to that. In other words, he's up to his old trick of trying to teach us differences and heterogeneities, and to insist that we do not assimilate all cases to one core paradigm case, and fetishize the core paradigm case. He wants us to see that 'thinking' covers a whole variety of different kinds of constellations of phenomena, of human conduct in its circumstances, in a whole variety of ways. But he certainly doesn't rule-out the discursive, silent, sort of soliloquy that people can engage in. What he does actually rule-out, although not perhaps quite as systematically as someone like Gilbert Ryle in his later papers on 'thinking', what he does, let's say, begin to rule-out is the idea that 'thinking' is IDENTICAL to a mental process of a discursive kind, even in those cases where indeed we can speak of there being a discursive process. [Tr: JC recommends Ryle, G. (1979). ON THINKING. Rowman and Littlefield]

What does that mean? What it means is that, what he wants to say is that saying things silently to oneself, whilst that phenomenon may very well be bound up with various cases of 'thinking', saying things silently to oneself is not IDENTICAL to 'thinking' even in those cases where one is saying things silently to oneself. For example, one may be silently rehearsing a part but not be thinking in so doing.

What one is saying silently to oneself may EXPRESS one's thinking about something, or may EXPRESS one's thoughts on a topic, but the things that one says silently to oneself do not EQUAL the thoughts one may be entertaining. Why so? Because the same thought can be expressed with different words. That's the first point he wants to make. In other words, you can be thinking the SAME thing, but be using different words. Remember the discussion of the 'same'. So, one can quite straightforwardly find two or three people telling you what they have been saying to themselves silently, and you can say "Well you've all been thinking the same thought", though the actual form of words that they articulate may be quite different. In a quite ordinary, uncontroversial, everyday sense.

Moreover, one can vary the circumstances, and find that the SAME words that one might be saying silently to oneself, amount to quite different thoughts. And here you are probably beginning to see the similarity that Wittgenstein draws between

the relationship between the words used and the thoughts expressed in the case of the mental, and the more general point he makes about the meaning of language, which is that the meaning of a term is not given by the term itself. So the same word can be used in different contexts to mean different things, and one can mean the same thing in different contexts by using the same word. So, it's just a sort of transposition to the domain of ratiocination of that more general point about saying and meaning in public.

Ok. Now, what are we to make of cases in which people say things like "I just had a thought", or "I had a sudden thought", where it appears that they may in doing so be describing some mental event, and it's the mental event that constitutes the thought? One of things that Wittgenstein wants us to see in regard to the use of that kind of expression is that it is not to be thought of, just given its form, it's not to be thought of as doing descriptive work, in the same kind of way that "I have a pain" is not to be thought of as doing descriptive work in virtue of the similarity of its form to other kinds of expressions which do descriptive work. So, "I just had a thought", for Wittgenstein, would be— he would tend to treat that as an avowal, a first-person avowal. But he doesn't really go into much detail about the various sorts of language-games that one can play with that avowal. He talks about the avowal of pain as forming a part, or being a constituent of a 'plea for mercy', or 'a request for medical attention', or 'a complaint against someone', or a variety of things. But he doesn't get much into detail tracking out the kinds of language-games that can be played with locutions such as "I just had a thought". Apart from to bar the assimilation of that expression to the class of 'descriptions'. And in particular, of course, there what he's trying to do is to say that we do not say things like "I just had a thought" on the basis of an interior observation of a mental event that we then describe. He's says it's something different. It's an avowal. "I just had a thought" expresses something about oneself. But he doesn't say much more than that.

And, in fact, it's the late Harvey Sacks who picks up on this issue out of Wittgenstein in his unpublished "Aspects of the Sequential Organization of Conversation", to make the following point. He says:

[I]t happens that the thoughts,

remembrances, wonderings and the like that persons who are engaged in topical talk have will routinely be on topic, and then that they do exhibit that they are operating, absorbed in the talk, by presenting their talk with such specific 'on topic' topic markers as "I just wondered", "I just remembered", "I just had a thought", and the like.

And he invites us to consider an extract that goes like this:

A: Um I just had a thought. I know someone who um uh has two smaller children, and uh would like, I think to get in some- just some weekends you know, but whether um she could do it regularly or not --

B: Well--

A: I think I'll talk to her.

And Sacks argues that the locution "I just had a thought", which prefaces the whole utterance, seems to work as a sort of pre-announcement, by analogy to things like: "Guess what?", "What?", "I got an A on my paper.", "Great.". "I just had a thought" is that sort of pre-announcement. It sets up what you're then going to say as an announcement of a specific sort, and proposes that the thing that is about to be said, whilst it might otherwise not have appeared to be topical, nonetheless that kind of pre-announcement topicalizes it. So it's a topic marker in Sacks' view. "I just had a thought" is a topic marker. And indeed it can quite sensibly, and intelligibly be avowed independently of the occurrence of any mental event whatever, of any significance. So one can say "I just had a thought", and then specify what it is you want to say independently of the thing you then proceed to say having occurred to you in its totality discursively prior to your being able rationally to say that you'd just had that thought. So, it's not as if it goes like this: "Um I just had a thought. I know someone who um uh has two smaller children, and uh would like, I think,..." - It's not as if all of that had to have occurred, so to speak, in the head, prior to its being articulated for that "I just had a thought" to be a rationally placed expression. And indeed that is all that it can mean. That is all that it need mean when one says "I just had a thought". One

isn't describing some mental or interior going-on. What one is doing is marking a possibly disjunctive thing as in fact topical. One is setting up that the thing one is about to say, whilst it might appear to be off-topic, is indeed on-topic. Or indeed simply that it is topically relevant.

One of the points I think is worth making, something I think Hunter mentions, about expressions like "I just had a thought", or "A thought suddenly struck me", or "A thought popped into my head", expressions of this sort, is that we don't usually find it either rational, or even intelligible, to follow up on an avowal of that sort with something like "Are you sure that it was a thought that you just had?", or "How do you know that it was a sudden thought?", or "Are you sure that you translated that thought properly into words?". We don't, in other words, make those kinds of inquiries as a rule, though we could do it if we wanted to be funny. And Wittgenstein often says that there are certain aspects of metaphysical philosophy which if actually articulated in practical discourse would come off as bad jokes. But notice that things like "Are you sure?", "How do you know?", can't intelligibly be said as seriously intentioned, and seriously hearable interrogatives after things like "I just had a thought", "I had a sudden thought", whereas they CAN, and routinely would, after things like "I remember", "I remember that now", or "I understand what you're saying", or "I knew it was him", things like that, where one can indeed get things like "Are you sure?", "How do you know?", and inquiries that have a genuinely interrogative character. And that is because the mental predicates of 'understanding', 'knowing', and so forth, are achievement claiming verbs of a kind. They are in that sense defeasible in respect of one's being unable as a matter of course to come up with the thing that one has claimed to have understood, known, remembered.

But they would be - these kinds of adjacency-paired 2nd-pair-part things like "Are you sure?", "How do you know?" - they would be coherent and cogent IF expressions such as "I just had a thought", "A thought suddenly popped into my head" were genuinely descriptive of observations. Because if they were genuinely descriptive of observations, then one could in fact be asked "Are you sure you observed rather than mis-observed?", "How do you know that you've observed the proper thing?"

Dave Bogen: Then would the one sort of limiting case be something like "I thought he was there", where 'thought' operates as an interrogative in its own right, and then can be "No, it wasn't him".

Jeff Coulter: Ah! No, that's a different concept, and we're going to move on to that right away.

Ok, let's get right to it, because there is a whole class of other uses of thought that mark tentativeness in the sense that "I thought it was him", "I thought it was a van Gogh but it turned out to be a Renoir", the "I thought that" which actually marks some sort of EITHER tentativeness on the part of the avowing agent, OR they have the character of retrospectively reconstruing what might have originally been a knowledge claim. So, you can get things like: "What's the capital of Peru?" "Montevideo." "Wrong. It's Lima." "Oh gee, I thought it was Montevideo." Where the initial thing that comes out of your mouth is unguarded, but whence proven wrong, one characteristically prefaced the thing that one had originally produced in an unmarked manner as now marked. Because there is no such thing as: knowing at time 't', and knowing at time 't1', when in between time one has been proved wrong. Knowing presupposes correctness. So, when one is characterizing a posterior knowledge claim now shown to be false, typically one uses something like "I thought". So, "thought" in these locutions, in these language-games, has two functions, one of which is to mark tentativeness or uncertainty, and the other one is to retrospectively reconstitute the knowledge claim as now having been refuted. So, those are two further language-games in which "I thought" has a home.

And it's even more perspicuous with something like "I think..". "I think that ..." is characteristically a guarding device, an index of some hesitancy, or uncertainty.

But then, just to make matters more complicated, in the case of "I thought", you can get locutions like "I thought you'd come" said to someone who's actually arrived at a party. Where what you're doing is you're not telling him that you had a mental process sometime earlier in the day about his coming, though you might well have said to yourself "I think he'll come". That's not what the thing means. When you say "I thought you'd come", usually in those circumstances, it's

more or less equivalent to "I KNEW you'd come", i.e., in the sense that "I expected and hoped that you would come, and low and behold you came". So, there is a very restricted set, that might be on the borderline of idiomatic rather than conceptually discriminative, where to say "I thought" in fact means that you've had an expectation fulfilled. But on the whole, for most ranges of cases, "I thought that.." does something like marking a failure of some sort in a knowledge claim. Characteristically you get things like "I thought that...but then realized". So, when you hear someone starting out an expression with something like "I thought that x was the case" then usually can find that it's setting up a thing that is going to contrast with it, such as "Now I know", or "Then I realized". And that is the way these things can run off.

Ok. Those kinds of uses are, I think, fairly clear. Let's call them 'tentativeness markers' and 'retrospective guarding uses'.

What we haven't yet done is to really look in any detail at some of the syntactical combinations that are important, because a concept like 'thought' takes a whole bunch of possible complementizers, and different kinds of object-complements. There's "I thought THAT...", "He thought THAT...". There's "thought THAT", "thought OF", "thought ABOUT", "thought UP", "thought IN" - in English, in German, etc. And when we think of first-person avowals of 'thoughts' as if they were mental reports of some sort, then it's the collection of things like "thoughts OF", and "thoughts ABOUT" that we're usually considering. Or, if we are not considering them explicitly, they are usually the ones that when we are forced to retreat, we get down to. Because "thinking THAT", and "having a thought THAT" is something like 'having an opinion THAT', or 'judging THAT'. But 'having a thought OF', and 'having a thought ABOUT' are more recalcitrantly analyzable as mental report prefaces of some sort. So, that thoughts OF or ABOUT some object-complement - 'thoughts OF x', 'thoughts ABOUT x' - are characteristically taken, in the history of psychological thinking, to be images, mental picturings, silent soliloquies, and expressions like "I thought of..", "I thought about..." are characteristically taken to be reports of or about such occurrences as images, mental picturings, or silent soliloquies.

Now when Wittgenstein moves to try to deny these claims, which he does in various places, in ZETTEL more than in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS, in the REMARKS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY and elsewhere, he sometimes might not have made it as clear as we would like that he's NOT denying that people have mental images, and he's NOT denying that people might engage in silent soliloquies without using their vocal cords. As he often puts it, he's not trying to deny the natural facts of human existence. But what he does want to deny, is that these phenomena constitute 'thoughts'. And he does so by basically extending the analysis of silent soliloquy to the analysis of images. And I guess we've already talked a little bit about that in the past. In other words, different thoughts can be expressed by the same image, and different images can be expressed by the same thought, by exact analogy to the way that different words can express the same thought and the same words can express different thoughts, depending upon the circumstances. And so the same thing that holds for words, holds also for images. We talked a little bit about that when we talked about mental images with the stick figures. The whole business of pictures not in themselves dictating their own possible applications, having to do with what the picture is a picture OF is not JUST a phenomenon that is given in the picture. So, what the thought is a thought of is not JUST given in the image that expresses it or the words that may express it.

Eileen Crist: Could you possibly elaborate on that a little bit more, because I don't quite understand it?

Jeff Coulter: About images, or about the whole business, the whole business of thoughts and their means of expression?

Eileen Crist: What do you mean that different images can express the same thought? Then what is the thought?

Jeff Coulter: Well, the thought could be 'the number of parking tickets I have'. I have a thought of the number of parking tickets that I have, and that could be expressed in just silently thinking the word "five", or having the following kinds of images:

5 five FIVE 555555555
 5
 555555555
 5
 5
 5
 555555555

There's all sorts of different images that could express 'five'.

Dave Bogen: I don't know that I understand it quite properly, but it always seems to me to be trouble to talk about 'the thought'. Whenever you talk about ways of, say, the images might express the thought, or that the thought eventually might be expressed, then that looks like a description of the thought. Then we go back to trying to talk about what the thought was. And you say it was 'the five parking tickets', but that's not the thought. That's a description of what the thought might be about. It seems a tremendously difficult thing to me.

Eileen Crist: Well why wouldn't that be the thought, in a sense, I mean the way that you would think of it. Why couldn't that be the thought?

Jeff Coulter: It is what expresses the thought, the thought being the number of parking tickets I have. In some other context, exactly the same thing might express 'the number 5', when I'm asked to think of a number between 1 and 10. It could be the SAME things expressing a different thought. Or different things, as here [Tr: see images of 5 above], expressing the SAME thought.

What it's designed to do is shake us out of the idea that a 'thought' is a sort of ethereal, mental thing that lies behind the means of representation.

Dave Bogen: But as soon as you start talking in the language of expression - I don't know how to shake out of the language of expression - I mean that apparently substantive expression - the notion of something standing behind. Do you see what I'm saying - that the image might express the thought, or that-

Jeff Coulter: But I can tell you what the thought was that it expressed.

Dave Bogen: But that TELLING - why is that telling not a report of the thought, or a description of the thought, rather than the thought itself?

Jeff Coulter: Yes, you could put it that way if you want to, but I don't have to deliver to you THAT [Tr: JC points to board] in order to tell you what my thought was.

Dave Bogen: That's not a problem. That's not the issue I'm picking away at exactly. It's that when, as you brought it up originally, for instance in the case of silent soliloquy, you said that's possibly an expression of thinking, but not identical with thinking. That has to do with the grammar of the concept.

Jeff Coulter: Because you could have a silent soliloquy that doesn't express thinking about something, or thinking of something, but just mental doodling, let's say. As just now, I'm reading that: Irwin T. Sanders Community.....[Tr: JC reading from a plaque on the wall in the room]. Am I thinking about..., of the Irwin T.....No. I'm letting the sentence go through my head. So, what distinguishes THAT from a case of THINKING ABOUT THAT. Using that means of representation has to do with the purposes for which I might do it, the game I'm playing, what I've been asked to do. Like if just suddenly the number '5' pops into my head, that's the not the same as 'thinking up' the number '5', as it might be, expressed in exactly the same sense, same way, if somebody has asked me to think of a number between 1 and 10, and I choose 5.

Dave Bogen: Let me hold onto it for a bit. I don't want to push things off the track yet.

Jeff Coulter: On the other hand, you don't want to be saying that- you don't want to make a strict identity claim about 'thoughts' and 'the things that express them' because the same thought can be expressed in different ways. But neither do you want that to give you the idea that in some way the thought is independent of any means of expression whatever. It's not that the thought can be had 'of something', 'about something', 'that something is the case', independently of ANY means of expression.

Dave Bogen: Ok. 'The same thought can be expressed in different ways', and you can give me the examples of how you might cover that. But then

what is the notion of 'same' there. What are you pointing to in the description of the same thought can be expressed in different ways?

Jeff Coulter: Does this help at all - here's something out of the BLUE AND BROWN BOOKS that Wittgenstein says. He talks about:

We want to say that the thought is not the same as its sentential expressions, since the same thought can be expressed in different ways, and in different languages even, but then we may ask: Since the sentential expression may be somewhere, where is the thought? Since we can find a location for the activity of speaking, where is the activity of thinking located? [Tr: see also BLUE AND BROWN BOOKS, page 7]

And Wittgenstein wants to say in classrooms, offices, cars...., NOT in your head. But the prime candidate for both of these, the thoughts and the activity of thinking, is inside the skull. And he wants to say that the search for where the thought is, the Thinking - now with capital 'T's' - is to be prey to the same kind of conceptual mistake as someone who is looking for the place of the kind of which the rules of chess treat, as opposed to the places of the various bits of wood, the kings of various sets. So, there is a sense in which if you want to know - you see that this bit of wood here carved up is the king, and in a sense it can be seen to be just a bit of wood, for certain purposes. It becomes a king in a game of chess insofar as it enters into certain relationships in the game, it's governed by certain rules. But there's no such thing as there being the king of which the rules of chess treat independently of playing the game of chess, or of the institution of chess, anymore than there's such a thing a 'THE thought', or 'thoughts' independently of their means of expression - when we're talking about 'thinking about' and 'thinking of'. But that's NOT to say that they are identical, in the sense that they are identical in all possible contexts, because this king - which I'm treating now as a king in virtue of its having a role to play in a game of chess - can be all sorts of different things. It can be, for example, a bookend

Dave Bogen: So in that sense, the same thought - when you say the same thought can be expressed in different ways - that's working in the same way, say within playing the game of chess, you

can say that's the same game...

[Tr: tape change]

Dusan Bjelic: ... this rook

Dave Bogen: That counts as the same king.

Dusan Bjelic: Right.

Jeff Coulter: It counts as the same piece.

Dave Bogen: As the same piece, let's say, {JC: right}, ok so that would be akin to whatever it is that allows for the same, when we talk about the same thought now, {JC: right} but within what game?

Jeff Coulter: Well any number of different possible games you might want to play. I mean, for all sorts of purposes you could say: "We thought the same thing about that problem.", where what in fact was done, out loud or in the head in the form of silent soliloquy, might have been quite different forms of words. You can for various purposes say: "We had the same thoughts about that." "Our thinking was identical on that topic." - without doubt meaning that the mode of expression is identical in the sense that the same words were used, or the same pictures were conjured-up. It depends on the purposes. 'Sameness' is purpose-dependent.

Eileen Crist: Couldn't somebody say then that that notion of thought is not very rigorously defined, because you have been talking about "We had the same thought", "we had the same idea", "we had the same notion" - whereas what would stop somebody, say a cognitive psychologist, from saying: "Well we want to define THOUGHT as that which happens inside the brain, whether it be image, or whether it be soliloquy? What would stop somebody from defining thought in that way?

Jeff Coulter: Grammar. Grammar would stop them, if they had any interest in grammar, which they have to have, of course, whether they like it or not.

Eileen Crist: But I'm wondering why. I'm wondering why grammar and language have to be such authoritative sources.

Jeff Coulter: Because they constitute the world prior to theorizing about it. Grammar, if you accept Wittgenstein's arguments, grammar lays down what kind of thing anything can be. Grammar establishes the possibilities of phenomena, in the Kantian sense. And, so, the rules of the language-games in which concepts, or the tools, the pieces like: thought, thinking get used, lay down for us, constitute for us what thought is. Now, of course, you can speak about the possibilities of some extensions of concepts, but they have to be consistent with the grammar. And certain theories of thought are inconsistent with the grammar. They are not genuine concept extensions. So to say, for example, that a thought is brain state or a brain event is not an extension, a hypothetical extension of grammar, but a violation of grammar. It's to be imagining that you're going to be explaining what we want explaining, namely thinking and thoughts, and stipulating ab initio some a-grammaticism to stand proxy for what we really need, which is a grammatical surview. But we have go further into this business of thoughts and brain states, etc., I guess. But that would be like a first answer. Look, I mean, we had this the other night from Dan Sperber - "What's all this ordinary language and folk psychology?". We're not describing people's theories of thought and thinking, we're not describing their pre-scientific theories about thought and thinking, we're describing thought and thinking in virtue of these are the concepts that people have, and that we have. They are not theories, they are constituting concepts. And if you're not going to have your theorizing constrained by the concepts that we have pre-theoretically, then you can go around making up any old possible world. There's just no way in which you can claim to be saving the phenomena of investigation IF from the very beginning you define it either out of existence, or you define it synecdochically, by letting a very tiny part of it stand for the totality. And it's at that point that the Wittgensteinian stuff on grammar and phenomenology join together - they are in the business of constitution.

But let's look at that business about brains, because this is really where the thing tends to take off. Because a lot of people want to say that it's not just that brain events enable people to have thoughts of various kinds, but that brain events really constitute the thoughts that people have. And they have done so on the basis of a whole variety of different kinds of analogies.

People following Carnap, for example, in Philosophy of Psychology, have wanted to argue that the concept of 'thought' is partially interpreted in the same sense that notions like 'energy' and 'nutrino' and 'quasar', and other concepts like that, are partially interpreted. And what Carnap meant by that was that we have a range of uses established for these concepts, but that we don't feel that we have exhausted the possibilities of their proper use, because they are still open for further discoveries. There are areas about them where we can use the existing grammar to lay down possible search procedures for our inquiries into their as yet further properties, but we don't yet have a fully worked-out grammar for notions like 'quasar', 'electron', and so on. And so there are a whole bunch of concepts that Carnap says are in the language, and he calls them "partially interpreted terms". In other words, we've got some bunch of rules governing their use, but we don't have closure, and we know we don't have closure. But, what is very crucial here, we know what kinds of things might count as closure in the sense that we know what sorts of places to look, and what kinds of things to look for. So we're not going to take any old thing to be a discovery about energy, or we're not going to take any old observation to be a discovery about neutrinos. The kinds of inquiries we make are going to be partly controlled by the grammar that is already established. Otherwise we can't know that any new finding we make is really a finding about a neutrino for certain, or about energy. What is to connect our inquiries with the thing we're interested in other than the rules for the use of the concept that are already established. And many people have argued that the psychological concept, particularly the concept of 'thought', is like THAT. That it's like a partially interpreted term. That one day neurophysiology, or cognitive psychology is going to tell us what thoughts mean, what thoughts are, as if it's a partially interpreted term like 'electron', 'nutrino', and all the rest of it. And that one way in which we might develop our inquiries of a neuro-psychological kind is to lay down operational definitions that are amenable to our kinds of empirical techniques of instrumentation for probing the brain, and all the rest of it, stipulating in advance an operationalization for the concept of 'thought'.

Now IF it were the case that the concept of 'thought' were partially interpreted by analogy to concepts like 'electron', 'nutrino', and so on, then some partial sort of operationalization for

practical purposes AS we have in the case of the physical sciences operationalizing energy in the various ways they do, that might make some sense at least as a first stab. But it turns out, and here's where you can tell the crucial difference, all of the attempts to operationalize 'thought' for purposes of neuro-psychology, and of violating the existing grammar, - so, for example, we have the Bruner type of operationalization of 'information scanning', etc., and we have, in the biggest knot of stipulations, we have the computational analogy, in which thinking is construed to be something like information processing.

Eileen Crist: Couldn't we say that something like 'negative matter' would have been initially considered a violation of grammar?

Jeff Coulter: What, anti-matter?

Eileen Crist: Anti-matter or negative matter.

Jeff Coulter: Yes, but matter is the kind of thing that is so broad that it's not only partially interpreted, it's barely intelligible anyway, and in fact it's really a pop-scientific version of what's going on. Like the concept of 'matter' is indeed really not a genuine physical concept. It's a concept that might be employed in giving renditions for lay folk. Because the notion of matter anyway is not something that figures in rigorous physical theories. It figures in Sir James Edington's 'mysteriousness of matter', and stuff like that.

Well, one of the reasons why 'thought', for example, is not partially interpreted has got nothing to do with dogmatism about existing usage, but has to do with the fact that the grammar that is established lays down that it makes absolutely no sense to imagine that anything that might be a referent for the concept of 'thought' has penetrabilia awaiting further investigation. Like concepts of 'electron', 'nutrino', 'energy', and 'matter' are of sufficiently open to provide for the possibilities of discoveries that supplement and extend the use of the notion. But 'thought' does not designate a phenomenon with any penetrabilia. It's not that you could imagine that there is some entity that you could probe with a cerebroscope and find out what its actual internal constituencies are. Which is not to deny that there may well be brain events that do have penetrabilia that enable one to have the thoughts one has.

George Psathas: The current parody of that is Doonsburry's search through Reagan's brain where he's looking for the thoughts.

[Tr: general laughter]

Dave Bogen: He's not finding them, but they should be there.

George Psathas: He's finding a lot of interesting 'garbage' though.

Jeff Coulter: The first way of avoiding that though is to remember that thought is a polymorph, and also that it has a necessary relationship to the complementizers. It's like the Husserlian/Brentanoan doctrine about consciousness. There is no such thing as 'thought' per se; it's 'thoughts of', 'thoughts that', 'thoughts about', 'things thought up', 'thoughts in'. So whenever anybody tries to tell you that 'thought' can be used as the name of an object, then the thing to do is to remind them that it has necessary complementizers, whether they be explicit or implicit. And that immediately breaks the grip of people of the idea that 'thought' is the name of a substantive object that is just not known about.

You can no more determine what a thought is from an investigation of brain processes, than you can tell what the grammatical rules are in a language by examining someone's vocal cords. Both of them are essential for speaking and for thinking. And an explanation of the occurrence of a thought is quite grammatically dissimilar from any explanation of the occurrence of a neural event. Malcolm has a nice quote here on that. He says:

An explanation of the occurrence of a certain thought consists in things like mentioning a reminder, or an association, or some reasoning, or a desire, or a worry, or an observation, or an image, etc. that led to the thought, or provoked it. [Malcolm, N. (1970). Rejoinder to Mr. Sosa. In J. S. Borst (Ed.) THE MIND BRAIN IDENTITY PROBLEM. MacMillan, page 183]

A neurophysiological explanation of the occurrence of a brain process or brain event cannot do THAT. The grammars are totally non-isomorphic. No more than an explanation of the physics of speech could amount to an explanation of the selection of some

particular word to speak, no more could an explanation of the occurrence of a brain event explain why you had the thought you had. Any more than an explanation of the physiology involved in making that movement [Tr: JC moves arm laterally and forward] could explain why you checkmated your opponent at that moment. And it is NOT because thoughts are mysterious sorts of ethereal things. A 'thought' is that which is expressed by its means of representation, or expression. And if you want to know my thoughts, I can tell them to you. And a thought consists in the way in which I have expressed it to you. But that is not to say that 'the thought that x' EQUALS - with the three sign, in the mathematical sense of equals is all and only all - the thing that I express it in, because I can express that thought in different ways. And that doesn't mean that I'm sort of clothing some naked mental thing with different clothes. I'm simply expressing myself differently.

Caesar Mavratsas: Sometimes we will say that we have thoughts that we cannot express, and we say "I have a very vague feeling", or "I have a very vague thought I cannot express in words". So how would you deal with that?

Jeff Coulter: What do you mean by vague thought?

Caesar Mavratsas: I mean somebody could say that he has a thought and he cannot express his thought.

Jeff Coulter: At all? Not even to himself?

Caesar Mavratsas: Yeah, he could say that he has a very vague thought of something.

Jeff Coulter: A vague thought? {CM: yeah} Ok, well you can express it in a very vague way then presumably, right? {CM: yeah} Because if you can't express a thought in any way at all then there is no basis for anybody ratifying your avowal of the thought in the first place.

There's a nice line in Alan R. White, I think it is, where he says this:

If someone claims to have just composed a couplet [JC: that's a poetic couplet] silently, and we ask him to recite it, we would not allow him to pause until he had also found the words, even if he claimed to have done his thinking

wordlessly.

Rather the pause would lead us to think that the guy had really hadn't made up his couplet.

He is always trying to bring the concepts down to ground, down to ground level.

Caesar Mavratsas: Or you say "I just thought about something", and then right after that you say "I forget". And what's that?

Dusan Bjelic: You forgot.

Caesar Mavratsas: You forgot what?

Dusan Bjelic: How do you know what you forgot if you forgot?

Ed Parsons[Tr: ??]: You know you forgot something.

Caesar Mavratsas: I mean to say that when you forget, at least you know something. And I can tell you that I forgot a thought that I had 10 seconds ago, (and) I (haven't) remembered the thought, so...

Jeff Coulter: Then don't forget the difference between first-person avowals and third-person ascription. First-person avowals have to live-up to criteria, they are not based on employing criteria. Now in your case, if you suddenly sort of come up like agitated and you say: "Listen, I've had a thought about this afternoon's class. Look, uh um ah... geez, it's gone". That fulfills all the criteria for having had a thought and forgetting it. That's how we use the expression "I just had a thought and forgot it". So what do you say: "Hey, hey, bu- ah... no". That's what's happening.

Remember this business about the pen, this is why, you know, back to 330. [Tr: in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS]:

330. ... "Yes, this pen is blunt. Oh well, it'll do." First, thinking it; then without thought; then just think the thought without the words. - Well, while doing some writing I might test the point of my pen, make a face - and then go on with a gesture of resignation. - I might also act in such

a way...

Et cetera. That fulfills the criteria for figuring- he figures his pen is blunt, but he doesn't care. He's going to go on anyway.

Caesar Mavratsas: Then what's the object of forget in that sentence? A thought you had, or a thought that you thought you had?

Jeff Coulter: We don't have an expression 'the thought that one thought one had', anymore than we 'seem to seemed to have heard'. That's not part of any language-game.

[Tr: One context in which "That's the thought I thought I had" would be intelligible would be as a sarcastic next to a challenge from another about what one was thinking.]

[Tr: pause]

Isamu Kamada: In psychology there is a distinction between short-term memory and long-term memory. And psychology still, especially behaviorists, identify, for example, perception with responses. So if somebody claimed "I perceive it", then he must describe it, what he saw. But concerning short-term memory, they cannot have any responses. For example, if you show letters or numbers via tachistoscope for maybe one second - and most people see six or seven numbers. And they begin to respond, to say what they saw. "I saw 6, 7, 5", and they forgot. And still they claim "I saw more. Maybe a half dozen. I saw six, but I just forgot". And that is called short-term memory. So, psychologists do not have any evidence that they saw them. But they admit that is short-term memory. Just for one second they can have the memory, they are just disappearing very quickly. And only in your long-term memory can you respond ().

Caesar Mavratsas: In that case you can see what you forgot. What is the similarity between the two examples?

Jeff Coulter: If some psychologist could show you that in fact there were six or seven, and you figured that indeed you had seen six or seven but couldn't remember them, then that corroborates your impression. On the other hand, if you didn't see them, but you claim to have seen them right after the experiment, would that have shown to you that they weren't there? Then you say things like "I

thought I did", "I thought I saw them", on the basis that in fact you couldn't have. It turns out you couldn't have. So, saying that "I thought I saw them" is a way of acknowledging that one's prior claim now has to be over-ruled.

'Thought avowal' is a way of down-grading 'knowledge claim'. That's how I was using that discussion.

Isamu Kamada: I'm saying the correct performance is not the criteria for his mental process.

B. J. Fehr: It's exactly the incorrect performance, I think, in short-term memory. They are not studying the inside of your head when they do that, right, they are presenting you with stimuli, and you make a response of some kind. Say they show you a list of numbers, and then they ask you to repeat it in some way. Part of the reason that it is called "short-term memory" is because for certain kinds of stimulus displays, you cannot produce a verbal report of what the psychologists claim was presented to you after a certain period of time. So, they say "Oh, well, if you remember it, you are only remembering it for a short while", or "You only remember bits of it" - like the "magic number 7 plus or minus 2". But that's exactly what makes it called 'short-term'. It's like a phone number - typical example is a phone number - you look a phone number up in the phone book, you close the phone book, you go to dial it, boom it's gone! And so you have to go look it up again, and they say "You might have had it for a LITTLE while, but it's exactly the fact that you can't now produce it that they say it is short-term.

Isamu Kamada: Yeah, I was just saying that the correct response, correct performance of something is not the criterion.

Jeff Coulter: For what?

Isamu Kamada: For there is something, memory or some process...

Jeff Coulter: No, no. We must be able always to distinguish between remembering and mis-remembering, or remembering and thinking that one remembered. Remembering and seeming to have remembered. Making a remembering claim is making a correctness claim. And correctness claims are defeasible. If you say "Well, I remember", and I say "Well you couldn't have remembered because

there weren't six there were only three". You say: "I remember six". I say: "Well there were only three". Then I'm not going to go along and concede that indeed you remembered six, because that is to concede that there were six. To concede that you remembered six is to concede that there were six to have been remembered. What I now say is: "You couldn't have remembered", and if you are rational and can speak the language, you have to back-off and say: "I SEEM to have remembered six. Obviously I couldn't have remembered six, because there weren't six to have been remembered".

George Psathas: I think he is saying "I saw six, but I remember three".

Jeff Coulter: Ok, well, it doesn't bear on the issue then.

George Psathas: (Ok, let me explain more then), You saw more than you could remember. You know you saw more, but you can't remember all of the ones that you saw.

Jeff Coulter: But whether or not he knew he can be accredited with having known depends on how many there in fact were.

George Psathas: Well I think he is trying to get at the private claim would be "I saw them. That is, I saw more than I can remember".

Jeff Coulter: Oh, we often go around stamping our feet and saying "I KNOW!", "I KNOW I saw it", "I KNOW it happened", but there are limits to it if it can be shown that indeed you couldn't have done, otherwise we have no basis on which to assign 'hallucinations', 'delusions'...

George Psathas: Well the point is that I can nevertheless be certain that I saw more. "I saw six of them. I saw six distinct objects; I can only remember three, and reproduce three". Therefore the criterion that I can correctly produce what I saw is for remembering, but not for knowing that I saw them. Is that right?

Isamu Kamada: Yeah. I'll tell you, in that experiment, most of the people, most of the subjects, had remembered five or six. But most of the people have claimed that they saw more, and they cannot remember them. So, there is another criterion, that most of the people insist that they saw more, and that they forgot. So there is some short-term memory. There must be. They think.

George Psathas: Yeah, whether we call it short-term memory or not - is this the issue - or is it how to deal with what you say you saw, but cannot remember to prove that you saw it.

Jeff Coulter: No, but there's a difference between 'remembering that there were more' and that being ratified, and 'remembering what they were and that NOT being ratified.

Dave Bogen: I guess the question what "Do you remember?" just depends on what the criteria are then.

Jeff Coulter: It depends upon what the implicit complementizer is too. "Do you remember how many?", or "Do you remember THAT there were any more?" The whole thing needs to be fleshed out. But memory is an achievement verb which can indeed be overthrown by it being demonstrated that the things that you claimed to have remembered were not in fact there to have been remembered. That is an absolutely elementary logical point.

Isamu Kamada: In the grammar of our ordinary use of the language we say "I remember", or "I have a memory" - that requires to show the evidence.

Jeff Coulter: No, that's TRUE. That's TRUE. You are not always REQUIRED to show the evidence. But in principle any such claim could be overthrown by the production of such evidence. And indeed by and large, we don't require such evidence because we might well be operating, depending on who we are operating with, on the principle of interpersonal charity. Absolutely crucial. I'm not going to cross-question you if you tell me you remembered that Husserl said something...., because you have been studying it, particularly recently. I'll allow that. But then suppose a few days later: "I'm going to check what Isamu said. I don't think Husserl said that." And it's not there where you said it was. I come back to you; you'll have to retract. Or I will, or whichever way the argument works. But we can do that. It's not that you are always having to produce the evidence right then and there. That's not what social constructionism is saying. Although notice in the case of 'understanding', as Sacks points out, the display and detection of understanding DOES tend to take place in situ, in the sequential organization of talk, the understanding of utterances. But recollections of things, no. We are not all the time in the business of ratifying or defeating them. That doesn't mean that they are not

ratifiable and defeasible. And in THAT sense a claim made by me is not subjectively sovereign just because I make it, just in virtue of its being me, or you, because I have so called privileged access to the interior of my head, which is the model on which that notion of privilege is ().

Isamu Kamada: () to memory or to vague memory. And maybe I have a certain image memory, and I cannot perform it because it's just an image, but it's still a memory.

Jeff Coulter: Yes, it may well be. And it may well be a mental image that is not a memory image. There's a distinction to be drawn between a memory image and a mental image. If you claim to have suddenly conjured up a memory image of your childhood in Japan, fine. Nobody is going to, unless there is some particular purpose, nobody is going to necessarily challenge that. But that doesn't mean that it stands as something over which you have absolute sovereignty (sub specu eternitatis), because somebody might conceivably be able to marshall evidence that, in fact, you weren't born in Japan, you were born in China of Japanese parents.

Isamu Kamada: About memory and thought belonging to the person, not the (sentence), not the performance. So, if you think, YOU think.

Jeff Coulter: Now, thought is different to remembering, understanding, knowing. Avowals of thought are NOT avowals that can be defeated in those ways. That's why I made the distinction earlier on between "Are you sure?" and "How do you know?" are not the kinds of things that we can intelligibly ask for the most part when someone says "I just had a sudden thought strike me about why don't we go out tonight", or "I had a sudden thought about", or "Something triggered a sudden thought". We just don't say things like that. But we CAN, if we've got some good purpose to show, and we meet the criteria for invoking the issue, we can in principle say things like "How do you know?", "Are you sure?", about memory claims, understanding claims, knowledge claims, and a whole bunch of other claims. But we don't play those language-games with thought avowal, because thought avowals are not achievement type avowals. But that doesn't mean that they can't be overthrown as well. Somebody might claim to have thought up a formula for the antidote to AIDS, and then he has got to cash that check.

Isamu Kamada: Ok, I think that Wittgenstein and you are right in saying that thinking is not an image in your mind. For example, suddenly you have an image that at a conference many people are coming together and speaking and discussing, and then I say "Oh yeah! I forgot I have to attend that conference". And then there is the next image of working at a table and writing a paper. "Yes. I have to write a paper." And he is saying that your thought is not that image. But your sentence () "I have to attend the conference", or "I have to write a paper"-

Jeff Coulter: The thought is expressed in the sentence you utter there, but the thought is NOT the sentence you utter. {IK: mm mhm} Very important. Look, he says: Words may be vehicles for our thought, language is itself the vehicle for discursive thought, but is not equal to discursive thought. And a Wittgensteinian philosopher, White, says: The words and images that accompany my thought are not themselves the thought, but the form that the occurrence of the thought took. How does the mere appearance of an image of a cluster of diamonds constitute thinking of my diamonds, rather than thinking of my wife's diamonds? Why should the utterance of the word "diamond" be counted as thinking of diamonds rather than thinking of the word "diamond"? It is how I take the image or word that constitutes it as my thinking of it as so-and-so, and how I take it is shown in what I am now disposed and able to do, not in what happened in the moment of my becoming so disposed. I might think of the same thing three times in one single hour, and have a different experience each time. So, what Wittgenstein wants to do is to also talk about the discursive apparatus of sentences and words in the SAME way as you have already now just conceded his point about images, namely that ANY apparatus of representation is just that. It's a means for expressing, NOT the thing expressed. ---- That's wrongly put. I'm sorry. It's: Thoughts are not identical to the words or images that express them.

Caesar Mavratsas: Going back to the (apes) question, if you say that a thought can be expressed in different ways, {JC: yeah} how do you make judgments about (anything) according to what standard?

Jeff Coulter: But then it depends upon your purposes for- it depends upon the language-game, the practices you are involved in, and the purposes you have. for various purposes, it might be said

that - let's say, let's try to work out an example here - I say to you "It's a really nice day for a picnic. Let's go out for a picnic." And you say "Yeah, the sun's shining. It would be terrific. We could go down by the river." And we both go and meet a mutual friend of ours in the corridor, and I say "Caesar and I have just had exactly the same idea. We've been thinking exactly the same thing. We're both going out for a picnic. Do you want to join us?" So, "We're both going out for a picnic" was the thought that we both expressed. The identical self-same, absolutely exactly the same thought, but we said different things, and we said them out loud there. We might have said them not out loud. But now supposing it were a case where the criteria were to be varied in virtue of some different purpose, as in for example, say one is engaged in intellectual labors of paraphrasing. What's Wittgenstein's thought here? And you say one thing, and he says something else, and- or let's say -- I'm trying to get a less strained and artificial example -- I can only fall back on my old parking tickets example at the moment. Maybe we should take a break for five minutes. Just to finish it off for the sake of it, like 'the same', we want now an example of 'the same' mode of expression being different thoughts. Ok, so, any of those [Tr: JC points to board with the various versions of 5]: five can be, having that mental image can be, indeed be thinking up a number between 1 and 10, or it can be, on some wholly different occasion, thinking of the number of parking tickets I have to pay.

Caesar Mavratsas: I have no problem with that. I mean having different expressions expressing the same thought.

Jeff Coulter: And having the same expression express a different thought. {CM: yeah, right} Which doesn't mean, and here's the real kicker though, it doesn't mean that thought is something mysterious, like a naked mental thing that is differentially being clothed. Because you can say clearly what the thought was. And you might have yet a different form of words. That somebody says: "Oh that was what your thought was". So, it's rather like the thought is really- you know, when you say that different words express the same thought, you're really saying that they accomplish the same task. That's about the closest I can do it, at least before a cup of coffee.

[Tr: general laughter]

[Tr: tape change and break]

Jeff Coulter: In order to connect up the business on thinking and thoughts with the private language argument, and probably the best paragraphs to do that are- take 335. [Tr: in the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS]

335. What happens when we make an effort - say in writing a letter - to find the right expression for our thoughts? - This phrase compares the process to one of translating or describing: the thoughts are already there (perhaps were there in advance) and we merely look for their expression. This picture is more or less appropriate in different cases.

Notice, by the way, Wittgenstein there uses the term "this picture". You know whenever he uses the term "picture", he means either "Bild" or "Vorstellung" in German, and he is against both.

Seminar Member: Model?

Jeff Coulter: Yeah, this model. (). What he's doing there is he's alerting you to the idea that you might be beguiled by the "picture" to make a wrong conceptual move.

335. ... This picture is more or less appropriate in different cases. - But can't all sorts of things happen here? - I surrender to a mood and the expression COMES. Or a picture occurs to me and I try to describe it. Or an English expression occurs to me and I try to hit on the corresponding German one. Or I make a gesture, and ask myself: What words correspond to this gesture? And so on.

Now if it were asked: "Do you have the thought before finding the expression?" what would one have to reply? And what, to the question: "What did the thought consist in, as it existed before its expression?"

Caesar Mavratsas: It could not exist before its expression. That's what he's arguing, right?

Jeff Coulter: Anyone want to make a stab at it?

"Do you have the thought before finding the expression?" what would one have to reply? And what, to the question: "What did the thought consist in, as it existed before its expression?"

Ed Parsons: It doesn't exist before the expression, because it has to be expressed.

Jeff Coulter: Which is not to say therefore that you can't say that we have trouble finding the right expression for our thoughts. The RIGHT expression, not any expression, but the right expression. Very often we want to find the right way of expressing our thoughts. And sometimes what we mean when we say that is not that we have AN expression, but we're going to reject that in favor of a better one, but rather that we don't yet know how to express ourselves, where there is no previously formed thought, as it exists with its expression, of course. It's a very tricky one, but I think that that's what he's after. He wants to say that it's Ok, there's nothing wrong, and, of course, don't forget, Wittgenstein is not trying to reform language, but to elucidate it, but to alert us to where we can be misled. We say things like "It's difficult to find the right expression for what I'm thinking." And then somebody can use that as evidence, as I guess William James and other people did, to support the idea that a thought is a sort of ethereal, pre-verbal, or pre-linguistic entity that now needs clothing in words. Note though, the RIGHT expression for our thoughts. Sometimes you can have a thought, in the sense that you articulated something inwardly, if you like, but now you want to find out how to put it in the BEST way. Or when you say one is having trouble finding the right expression for one's thoughts what one can mean is simply one is having trouble expressing oneself at all.

Caesar Mavratsas: What's a thought expressed in a bad way then? I mean if you express a thought in a bad way, if you don't express it well, so, what was the thought, the thought you expressed - the thought as expressed, or the thought as you- or the thought expressed in a better way, in that case?

Jeff Coulter: If you say something and it's not clearly communicating anything, then one way of saying that is that you have expressed yourself badly. You could also say, putting it in a more elaborate way, invoking the notion of thought, that you have expressed your thought badly. But what that means that you simply haven't said the thing properly, you haven't expressed yourself properly. One of the things Wittgenstein does very often is to get us to see that the uses of some of these expressions like thought can in fact be deleted without loss of sense by paraphrase. And also to note that in those cases where we have an expression USING these mental constructs, we readily want to use them as ammunition for a metaphysical *Vorstellung*, for a picture, in which—because we are very much beguiled toward the idea that a thought is something ethereal, as he puts it in many places. A thought is something that is really sort of mysterious.

Well another way in which you can find him making the connection back to the private language argument is— or rather A way in which you can see him making this connection, is when he always insists for any concept that does have a role to play in our language-games, or roles to play in our language-games, he asks: Imagine how these concepts can be acquired.

Now IF the concept of thought were a label or a name exclusively for a private inner entity, by analogy to the argument about pain, how then could one acquire the concept of thought for use in one's own and other people's cases? And the argument is very similar though not exactly parallel to the argument about pain. Basically he denies that there can be radically private objects, which are possible objects for knowledge. And indeed it turns out that, of course, the ways in which kids learn how to use the term 'thought' is by being trained in using expressions like "I thought that..." where it turned out that they were wrong, or "think that...", or "I thought that..." where they have some reason to be uncertain, where they are in the presence of others speaking and doing things and saying things in certain circumstances that are sufficient to satisfy the criteria for assigning to them that they think such and such, they have such and such a thought. These are the kinds of language-games in which the thought is embedded and acquired, which is not to say that thought decomposes, as the logical behaviorists would want to have argued, into simply the behavior and the circumstances.

Caesar Mavratsas: Does it have to be either a social constructionism or private language?

Jeff Coulter: Go ahead you've obviously got something in mind. You've obviously got a thought there that you want to-

Caesar Mavratsas: No, no, no. I mean if you accept that there is no private language, do you have to accept that everything is socially constructed?

Jeff Coulter: I'm a bit worried about the 'everything' there.

Caesar Mavratsas: Like thoughts, and intentions, motives, etc.

Jeff Coulter: Yeah, these are social constructions.

Caesar Mavratsas: So, if you accept that they are not private, it follows logically that they are social.

Jeff Coulter: Um. The anti-private language argument is useful in attacking various individualistic psychologism and mentalism. It's part of the ammunition to support the general social construction way of thinking about human conduct. But I think it also contributes to, let's say, a broad division in the human sciences between the physiological and the semiological, if you like, or the semiotic, or the conceptual. But what we don't really clearly have worked out are the relationships between the two orders. We can say things like: Well, neural events enable one to have thoughts. The neural events are the prerequisites, the necessary but not sufficient conditions for thinking. We will want to argue against all forms of psycho-neural reductionism. But we haven't really worked out in any systematic way the exact relationships between the kinds of possible contributions that physiology and neuro-physiology can make on the one hand, and sociology, or let's say socio-logos, if you like, can make on the other. That's not really been systematically done. What the social construction stuff does is tend to heterogenize and dereify all of these notions. It has a major dereifying function for the human sciences, a demystifying function, I would argue, which is the bulk of what Wittgenstein was about, because he argued that there are various ways in- there are various things we say which when we consider them in abstraction

from our practical language acquisition and use patterns may conjure up for us misleading doctrines and theories about these ideas. And these theories have found their way into the sciences. This is really why we spend so much time in this class looking at this stuff, because many of the kinds of metaphysical pictures that Wittgenstein is trying to undermine have found their way into the sciences, particularly the human sciences.

Caesar Mavratsas: Does he say anything in the TRACTATUS about private language?

Jeff Coulter: No.

Caesar Mavratsas: He doesn't deal with it at all?

Jeff Coulter: He doesn't attack the Cartesian conception. No, in fact, he seems to be somewhat in the grip of a fairly pernicious mentalism in the TRACTATUS, which he's trying to explode here.

Eileen Crist: Is it possible to conceive of neurology and sociology meeting without any intervening theory of mind. If it's not possible to have a theory of mind which would ever be scientific, how could we see these two domains ever meeting?

Jeff Coulter: By a systematic unpacking of the grammars of all the concepts of human conduct, experience, and cognition, and finding out fairly systematically what sorts of criteria are involved in avowing and ascribing all of these kinds of concepts and predicates, and then seeing what are the genuine natural-kind concepts and what are the polymorphs, and so on, until one has a bunch of things that one can genuinely search out correlates for.

Eileen Crist: In a neurological sense?

Jeff Coulter: Yeah, sure.

Eileen Crist: But how could that be possible without any kind of theory of mind? I mean no matter what we discover in neurology, no matter how much we understand how neurons work, (we wouldn't be able) to find concepts by staring- by putting neurons under a microscope. {JC: Of course not} Oh. Ok. Then how would those two domains ever meet?

Jeff Coulter: Well, first of all, let's forget about theory and talk about explication of the concepts. If you want to call that a theory of the mental language then that's all right, I suppose, but it's really not a theory of mind. It's an anti-theory of mind, because there nothing to have a theory about; if the Wittgensteinian demystification process is on the right lines there is no entity. There's the apparatus and there's that which it enables ().

B. J. Fehr: Would it be helpful to have cross-cultural logical grammatical analysis in this regard, so that you could talk about the social organization of physiology? There's some things coming out of sort of a Geertzian approach to anthropology. I'm thinking of Michelle Rosaldo's work on emotion, where, I don't think she's exactly doing a logical grammatical sort of a thing, but some of her...

Jeff Coulter: Caroline Lutz, have you read any of her stuff? {BJF: no}, same kind of stuff.

B. J. Fehr: But you get a different sort of grammar of subjectivity in some of these cultures that they are looking at with respect to emotion concepts, and there is something about that that brings it alive for me, but I'm not sure whether that would be a necessary component to building the connection between say physiology and a conceptual analysis.

Jeff Coulter: It's not that you get different grammar; there's only one grammar. But rather you get different kinds of emphases and different practices that bring out certain things, or put certain things together in slightly different ways. Like there's this thing surrounding a circumcision ritual among the Indebende [Tr: sp?] called "lirima" [Tr: sp?], which is not, as you would expect, translatable into a word equivalent, but is something like having a sort of consuming rage which- it has many family resemblances with rage, but it also has family resemblances with elation, because you're engaged in "lirima" you are enraged at the prospect of losing a part of your body, but elated at the "rite de passage", and it's called "lirima". And, of course, we don't have "lirima", to the best of my knowledge, but we all know what it means. Now we can see exactly what's being talked about, because we know what rage is, we know elation is, we can see how it might be possible that aspects of both could combine in such a circumstance.

B. J. Fehr : And it's because we can understand it that you say that there's only ONE grammar?

Jeff Coulter: Yeah, because all languages are inter-translatable. Sure. Absolutely.

To come back to this business about the physiology though, the thing is that neurophysiologists can have all kinds of interest in tracking out what it is about the body and the inner-workings of the central nervous system, and all the rest of it, that enables people to do what they do. But in order for them to do that, they have to have some very good rigorous descriptions of what it is that people are DOING, that it makes sense to speak of in terms of enabling devices and mechanisms. And many of the things that have been looked for, the classic one, of course, is what I started out this whole game with which is schizophrenia, don't decompose into the kind of descriptably, circumscribable sorts of phenomena that you can then map onto descriptions of underlying mechanisms. Like, for example, paranoid belief for which all kinds of physiological mechanisms have been systematically sought. But belief is not a natural kind concept. It's doesn't make reference to a state, a process, an occurrence of any sort. But it's very often assimilated into something like a mental state. If you believe something then you have a certain sort of mental state, and that's your belief, so now if people have a belief about something then let's treat that as their inner certain mental state, and then let's look for the correlative, underlying neural state. And, in fact, one of things Wittgenstein does in- and if you track down his references under the heading 'states and processes' in the back of the PI, you'll find all kinds of places where he says: There's a tendency for philosophers, and he could also be talking about contemporary neuro-psychologists, to parcel out the mental language and the conduct language into states and processes. And the reason for that is not because that is the logic of the mental language, but because states and processes are the kinds of things about which it might make sense to look for biological correlates. You know, one of the reasons why the study of depression, and the underlying neurobiology of depression, is more advanced than any other part of the whole game, is because one can TEND to be able to circumscribe entering into and departing from a state of deep depression in a clock-timeable manner, and it's very very close to a physical concept, if I can

talk about physical depression.

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

These transcriptions were prepared from an audio recording, the auditory quality of which was not always optimal. Participating members, especially Jeff Coulter, have reviewed initial drafts of the transcripts and have attempted to clarify portions that were particularly difficult to hear, and also provided assistance in correcting errors in transcription that were made during the production of the first draft of each session. The generous assistance of all those involved is gratefully acknowledged. Particular appreciation goes out to Jeff Stetson who took on the laborious task of copy-editing. Unfortunately, not all errors in transcription, and not all inaudible portions could be corrected given the time lag in producing the transcriptions. The transcriber apologizes for any remaining typographical errors.

The following are conventions employed in producing the transcriptions of these meetings:

- [x] square brackets: Text in square brackets is for the most part that of the transcriber. Such text is indicated by "Tr:" at the beginning of the brackets. It includes: 1. paraphrases of talk, 2. clarification of indefinite references, for example pointing, drawing or writing on the chalk-board, producing a behavioral display etc., 3. information about references to texts referred to in the talk, 4. other general remarks and clarifications and 5. indications of omissions and tape changes. PLEASE NOTE that there is almost always some bit of talk missing at the points of tape change. On occasion, comments in square brackets are insertions offered by those who have edited the text and are indicated as such by the initials of the person in question, e.g., [JC: xxxxxxxxx]. Also, if additions or deletions are made in text quoted during the class, then these changes are noted in square brackets, with the speakers initials included within the brackets.
- { x } braces: Text in braces is the talk of persons who are commenting on or responding to the talk of another person

who currently has the floor. This talk is introduced by the initials of the person making the remark and/or comment, e.g., {JC: xxxx}.

- (x) parentheses surrounding text: Text in parentheses is the transcriber's best guess as to what was being said when there is some doubt about exactly what was said due to the poor auditory quality of the tape.
- () empty parentheses: Parentheses containing no text indicate a portion of the talk which is not transcribable due to the poor auditory quality of the tape, although it is possible to tell that something was being said.

CAPITALIZATION: Capitalization is used to indicate titles (or partial titles, e.g.: INVESTIGATIONS for the PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS) for books. It is also used to indicate vocal emphasis by the speaker in question, i.e., something which is spoken noticeably louder, or with more emphasis than the surrounding talk. It was not possible to underline text in the editing/text-formating system employed, which is why capitalization rather than underlining was used in the above cases. This also influenced the forming of terms in languages other than English, e.g.: Ubersicht, vis-a vis, etc, which are neither capitalized, nor underlined, although occasionally are explicated in square brackets following the text in question.