

## Essay Unit 6 – John StGeorge

Does thought entail the possession of language?

Given the diversity of language users, the question “does thought entail the possession of language?” is a complex one. Each category, thought, language, mind and reality possess an overarching relationship to one another and yet, in their own right, are independent.

Say, thought may be the gateway to reality via the language of the mind expressing its experiential existence. However, the ability to communicate with other subjects, does not, necessarily, entail the use of language.

The non-verbal means of communication come to the fore in varying forms including, gesticulation, posturing, facial contortions, and in the more artistic and humorous vein, Marcel Marceau and Mr Bean. So, there exists a multiplicity of languages depending on who is doing the communicating. Expanding the numbers of non-language users involves the animal world.

Possessed of many senses such as smell, sight, hearing, and animal logic, the successful access to food is guaranteed. Many of these senses, in common with human beings, strongly suggest the ability for thought in the animal world. As non-language users, the animal world has been able to develop a language of their own. Clearly demonstrated in the ability to play among themselves, gather and store food, and experience pain and pleasure. Can animals have thoughts, can they think? The evidence appears to confirm the ability of thought without the possession of a language.

The human condition, perhaps because of language use, brings about a different level of existence. Thoughts and language combine to service the mind and the investigation of reality. In general, the thoughts are acted out in the public forum, verbally and non-verbally. Those thoughts not expressed may well produce another category of private thoughts that remain mentally excluded from the judgements of other subjects. It may be that a good deal of thought was never intended for public appraisal. So it may be that in the case of private thoughts, the possession of a language may not be necessary for every day life. Does the thought have an intended use outside the thinker?

Perhaps the essential question surrounds the advantages (or disadvantages) associated with the use of language, rather than thought not having that extension. The possibility of a wide range of representations of language exists in music, gymnastics, engineering, parenting; all these domains are promulgated in society through the use of a language of one form or another. Must language have a linguistic base to qualify for the appellant?

The question “does thought entail the possession of language” can be answered in the affirmative and the non-affirmative. The need for communication appears to be a trait shared by both user and non-users of language. Thought also seems a commodity in behavioral exhibitions for all parties to observe and interpret. Necessity seems to be the main driver for thought to entail the possession of a language, but not always.