

In Other Tongues: creating metaphysics, embodying language  
a conference and creative summit. June 7-9 2017  
Dartington Hall, Devon UK



For millennia we have called on rational thinking to puzzle, to explain, to solve — to help us live our lives clearly and logically; where that falters we call on other understandings – myth, ritual and gods – to guide us.

For the past two hundred years or so we have become a little giddy with our power over knowledge as our understanding of the material world has grown with little let or hindrance — with other older knowledges often dismissed in the process as mere superstition. With all we have learned have we in our confidence perhaps forgotten that knowledge is a fleeting thing, held only through the permissions and presuppositions of the dominant culture.

In this country in just a few decades we have lost (or been on the verge of losing) vast swathes of knowledge: how to farm without chemicals, how to build railway engines, how

to house ourselves and those we love at a proportionate cost, how to co-exist with a radical dependence on the natural world. Fundamental ways of knowing – what Berman (1981) refers to as the ‘archaic tradition’ – have increasingly been overturned. He reminds us that earlier cultures understood ‘certain things about light and colour...electricity and gravity that modern science has left out’.

*There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—  
Turn wheresoe'er I may,  
By night or day.  
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.*  
— Wordsworth (1804)

We have brought together an eclectic collection of voices, forming an event that mixes the best of academic thought and tradition with the experiential and the experimental. Our keynote speakers are Prof. Wendy Wheeler who will introduce the emergent field of biosemiotics, and poet Alyson Hallett. Sound artist Tony Whitehead leads us into the sonic world of night-time and dawn-time; Felix Prater, Laura Cooper and Cherie Sampson lead us toward animal lives and our animal selves; Lori Diggle, Nancy Miller and Melissa Sterry amongst others remind us of the power of myth and story-telling and its continuing and new relevance; John Hartley leads us on to the river; others are materialists, guiding us to new insights of stone, field, water, fungi. Stephan Harding talks about the science of interspecies communication. We will encounter languages familiar and strange, and we'll aspire to co-elaborate new forms of communication together through this unique gathering amongst the long, heady days of summer along the River Dart.

In addition to this rich array of speakers are an equally rich selection of hands-on small-group workshops. There are three sessions of workshops (12 in all) over the course of the three days, meaning that you can choose to participate in up to three workshops.

To learn more and to register visit [www.inothertongues.info](http://www.inothertongues.info)

*To us the land was alive. It talked to us. We called her our mother. If she was angry with us, she would give us no food. If we didn't share with others, she might send harsh winters or plagues of insects. We had to do good things for her and live the way she*

*thought was right. She was the mother to everything that lived upon her, so everything was our brother and sister. The bears, the trees, the plants, the buffalo. They were all our brothers and sisters. If we didn't treat them right, our mother would be angry. If we treated them with respect and honor, she would be proud.* (quoted in Nerburn 2002)

Berman, Morris. *The Reenchantment of the World*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981.

Nerburn, Kent. *Neither wolf nor dog: on forgotten roads with an Indian elder*. Novato, CA: New World Library, 2002

Wordsworth, William. *Ode: Intimations of Immortality* (from *Recollections of Early Childhood* 1804)