

PUBLIC LECTURE BY

EDCP SUMMER NOTED SCHOLAR

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Earth and Dark Wonder: Notes on Animism and Technology in an Age of Ecological Wipe-Out

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We live in an era of both wonderment and despair, of technoutopian dreams and dizzying ecological breakdown. Many persons who spend large stretches of time out of doors, in fairly direct interaction with the more-than-human terrain, often find themselves beset by a deepening malaise when they consider our human future within the biosphere. Other persons who spend a large part of their days engaged with new media or developing new technologies, often feel buoyed by a sense of open and unbounded possibility when they ponder that future. In truth, many of us find ourselves gripped by *both* of these apparently contrary moods, flipping back and forth between them without ever locating a clear vantage from which to understand these moods in light of one another. Using the lens of **animism** to examine the perceptual dynamics at play in our sensorial encounters -- both with the animate earth, and with the remarkable technologies that increasingly mediate our relation with the biosphere -- this talk will strive to discern a common pattern at work within these two ostensibly contradictory moods and modalities of engagement.

Dr. David Abram, a cultural ecologist and philosopher, is the author of *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World* (Vintage, 1997), and *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* (Pantheon, 2010). Hailed as “revolutionary” by the *Los Angeles Times*, as “daring” and “truly original” by *Science*, David’s writings have catalyzed the emergence of several new disciplines, including the burgeoning fields of ecopsychology. His essays on the cultural causes and consequences of environmental disarray are published in numerous scholarly anthologies and are regularly discussed in scholarly journals. David’s public presentations often engage the ecological depths of the imagination, exploring the ways in which sensory perception, poetics, and wonder inform the felt relation between the human animal and the animate earth. A recipient of the international Lannan Literary Award, as well as fellowships from the Rockefeller and the Watson Foundations, in 2014 David held the international Arne Naess Chair in Global Justice and Ecology at the University of Oslo. He lives with his children in the upper Rio Grande valley of New Mexico.

This lecture is part of the 2017 Summer Noted Scholar Series hosted by the Faculty of Education



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