

Beyond Words: The Unknowable and the Unutterable in early modernity

Friday 1 June 2018

9.00-18.00

CREMS, University of York, Treehouse,
Humanities Research Centre

Keynote Speaker: William Franke (Vanderbilt).

**Author of 'On What Cannot be Said' and
'A Philosophy of the Unsayable'**



This conference will explore the parameters of the Unknowable and the Unutterable in early modernity. It will range across the theological, the literary and the scientific, to attend to what early modern thinkers deemed beyond what they could find words for. If this apophatic inheritance – the language of what can't be said – was a theological-mystical mode of thinking, what happened to it in the post-reformation climate of thought? Did natural philosophy understand the knowable limits of nature in the manner of the apophatic? How did emergent science negotiate the edges of what could be thought? What uses did early modern writers find for the apophatic traditions, Dionysius, Cusa, or John Scotus Eriugena? How did early modern poetry attend to the ineffable and that which was beyond words? The conference invites papers on the unknowable, the unutterable, the unthinkable and the unsayable, all broadly considered, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, whether English or European.

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

PANELS INCLUDE:
NATURAL PHILOSOPHY AND
THE UNSPEAKABLE,
ENGLISH RELIGIOUS
UNUTTERABLES,
ENGLISH POETIC SILENCES &
MUSIC, ALLEGORY

A FULL LIST OF
SPEAKERS CAN BE
FOUND ON THE CREMS
WEBSITE.

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