



DAVID **CRYSTAL**

How do you explain a vision? Only through language—and languages. Each of the six thousand or so human languages provides a unique record of the community that uses it—and they are currently dying out at the rate of one every two weeks or so. This means that half the world's languages will have disappeared by the time this century is over. We urgently need to document disappearing languages, therefore—for once a language that has never been written down dies, it is as if it has never been. We also need to celebrate the languages that are secure, and help the communities that want their endangered languages to be revitalized. My hope is for a renewed awareness of the central importance of linguistic diversity in achieving peaceful coexistence, and I want to see language and languages placed center stage. A Nobel-like prize for language. Major artworks celebrating language. And a living museum of languages in every country. For a start.

Who Is David Crystal?

David Crystal has spent his life exploring language and languages. Brought up in Wales, he studied English language and literature at University College London, then went on to teach linguistics at Bangor and Reading universities. He is currently honorary professor of linguistics at Bangor. He published the first of his hundred or so books in 1964 and now works from his home in Holyhead, North Wales, as a writer, editor, lecturer, and broadcaster. Since leaving the full-time academic world in 1984, he has also worked in reference, as editor of the Cambridge and Penguin families of general encyclopedias, and is currently much involved in Internet analysis, developing sense-engine techniques for improving search-related activities. www.davidcrystal.com

LITERATURE THAT HAS INSPIRED DAVID'S LIFE:

The Use of English, Randolph Quirk

The Language Poets Use, Winifred Nowottny

Explorations in Shakespeare's Language, Hilda Hulme

The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands, Yigael Yadin

Collected Poems, Dylan Thomas