

Ep 2 Culture in Everyday Life Transcript

Voiceover [00:00:03] This podcast is brought to you by the University of Aberdeen.

Simon Gall [00:00:41] Hello, and a very warm welcome to the Culture and Everyday Life podcast produced by the Elphinstone Institute at the University of Aberdeen. The Elphinstone Institute is a centre for the study of ethnology, folklore and ethnomusicology with a research and public engagement agreement covering the northeast and north of Scotland. Through interaction with researchers and practitioners, this podcast explores cultural phenomena in everyday life. This recording of the 2016 David Buchan Lecture comes from the Elphinstone Institute archives. It was delivered by Valdimir Hafstein Professor in the Department of Ethnology, Folklore and Museum Studies at the University of Iceland since completing his PhD at the University of California, Berkeley, in 2004 he has published a number of articles and edited volumes on folklore, intangible heritage, international heritage, politics, cultural property and copyright in traditional knowledge. His work has been translated into French, Italian, Portuguese, Croatian and Danish. Valdemar is former president of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore SEF and a former chair of the Icelandic Commission for UNESCO. His lecture, Copywriting Tradition in the Internet Age, Creativity, Authorship and Folklore, explores the entanglements between creativity, authorship, digital culture and copyright law. The lectures, abstract reads as follows should be copyright culture. How can one compose a 100-year old traditional lullaby, who own Cinderella and what would the Brothers Grimm say, what is the historical provenance of such catch 22? While we may not resolve them in this talk, the lessons we learn from unpicking them can inform our thinking about creativity and agency in contemporary culture. In 1844 Hans Christian Andersen accused the Brothers Grimm of stealing his tale, The Princess and the Pea, that Andersen elsewhere attributes this tale to oral tradition, he heard it as a child, seems not to preclude it from becoming something that others could steal from him. Bizarre. Actually, it's not such an unusual story, and the United Nations even has a special committee negotiating a new international convention that addresses such appropriations of traditional culture and traditional knowledge in music and medicine in visual and verbal art. Beginning with the paradoxical case of a traditional lullaby that acquired a composer late in his life and fell into copyright, this talk grapples with representations of creative agency such as authorship and tradition that are endowed with the force of law through the copyright regime. My motivation is to understand the dichotomies that shape understandings of creativity so that we will be better placed to undermine them, to liberate our imagination from their powerful hold, and to imagine creativity in alternative terms. In a digital age such acts of liberation and imagination are badly needed. Creativity is still enclosed in categories from another era and bogged down by the weight of 19th century romantic ideals about the author. Since giving the Buchan lecture in 2016, Valdemar has published two books and released a documentary film on subjects related to the lecture. Making intangible heritage illegal, NSA and other stories from UNESCO was published in 2013 by Indiana University Press and patrimonial that is Heritage versus Property was published by Cambridge University Press in 2020, co-authored with Martin Skyrdstrup. His documentary film, The Flight of the Condor, A Letter, a Song and the story of Intangible Cultural Heritage, co-produced with filmmaker Aslaug Miner's Daughter, has been screened at numerous film festivals and conferences worldwide and is available in open access online. His next book, Copywriting Tradition Unknown Authors and The Voice of the Folk, is under contract with Indiana University Press. The recording begins with a short presentation on the Elphinstone Institute's work by director Dr. Thomas McKean. This is followed by some introductory remarks by the then University of Aberdeen principal Professor Sir Ian Diamond.

Dr Thomas McKean [00:05:01] Good evening, everyone. Oh, that must be very loud out there then. Welcome to the second annual David Buchan lecture, founded in memory of the folktale and ballad scholar David Barker. And I'll tell you more about him in a minute. But first of all, I want to tell you a little bit about the Elphinstone Institute. Many of you will know what we do, but some of you won't. So I want to just give you a brief outline of our remit. We were founded in nineteen ninety five as part of the quincenary celebrations to build a bridge between the university and the community by researching and promoting and celebrating the culture of the northeast of Scotland and the North, we study culture and context through the disciplines of ethnology and folklore. And fundamentally that means individual experience, families and communities talking to people, individuals about their experience, how they make their way through the world. And I like to think of folklore. That is the kinds of human culture that we come up with. Oral traditions and customs and practices are all ways of making sense of the world around us as we move through it and trying to control what we can in some way of the world around us, some many things which can't be controlled, such as last Tuesday's events, which I tried to control through various verbal charms and so on. But it didn't work. At any rate, Folklore and Ethnology can tell us not so much what happened, but what people thought about it and how they felt about it. And that has great significance, I think, for how we how we perceive the world and how we perceive human history. So, we do this, as I said, through talking to people. This is my colleague Frances Wilkins, talking to a Cree fiddler in James Bay, Ontario, about Scottish fiddle traditions that have been going native, so to speak, in Ontario for the last hundred and fifty years and acquiring a a different kind of dialect than they have over here, we teach as well. We have students on a field school here. We teach Ethnology and Folklore and any of you who might be interested in a degree, our youngest graduate was twenty-three and our oldest was eighty three so don't feel that you shouldn't apply for an MLitt as soon as possible – have a word with me afterwards. We also publish ethnology and folklore materials, the results of our research in books like this and in articles as well, academic journals and so on. But a large part of our remit is public engagement that is taking our work out and learning from the people in the northeast here and shaping our research around their interests, their concerns, their questions and that sort of thing. So I wanted to just summarise a few of the themes that we talk about. One of them would be renewal. This is the 'Boaties' project founded by my predecessor, Ian Russell, outside Peterhead, where they build model boats. And we decided to set up a series of workshops to learn to make these model boats. And everybody said there'll be no interest. But we had probably 10 times the number of people that we could take on the workshops. And here you see one of the older people giving of his knowledge and experience to the younger people. So, we try to encourage renewal of cultural traditions. We explore the ideas of negotiation where people who burn large objects in streets have to deal with the policing and insurance systems of the modern world, so they have to negotiate how this is going to work. Negotiations between the people who burned the Clavie, Burghhead, on the north coast and the police and council officials who have to look after the safety of their citizens turns out that the people who burned the Clavie have at least five hundred years of knowledge about how not to get burned. So they're quite good at it. So there's this constant negotiation between tradition and authority. I hesitate to call it modernity because that implies that tradition is always old and it isn't. Tradition is always renewing itself and changing. And the Clavie too, although it is, broadly speaking five hundred years old, has evolved over the years in various ways. Sustainance, we like to support traditions where we can, and this is the traditional singing we can clearly, again, founded by my predecessor, Ian Russell, three days of unaccompanied singing, which to many sounds like a nightmare, but in fact, it's actually lovely. And it's three or four different venues within this clearly farm park to the west of Aberdeen here, where people can go and tell stories through songs and talk about songs. It's a lot like the song tradition, probably used to be a

couple of hundred years ago with people sitting around talking through songs and singing a few verses and explaining some bit of the story they didn't understand. Somebody else contributes another verse. So, it's a lovely sort of organic setting in which to take part in the singing tradition of the Northeast, which is one of the richest in the world. Tradition evolves, as I said, from old to new on the left there we have some neepy lanterns and on the right there are some plastic accoutrements for Halloween costuming. I just did a talk on the origins of Halloween in San Francisco a week ago and explained to them that they didn't invent it. But in fact, it started off here and in Ireland and then went over there and things got too unruly. Apparently, all the mischief and tricks in the nineteen thirties were getting out of hand. And so the authorities introduced this idea of trick or treating for candy and try to make people behave themselves, although I'm not sure getting hyped up on sugar is the best way to do that. Social resilience, we also think about how tradition and how knowledge, traditional knowledge can build community and build social resilience in a community and in individuals, these are a couple of boat building projects here in the Northeast where young people and older people get together, learn skills from each other by invitation and observation as well as instruction. And it builds a kind of teamwork that you really have trouble building another way. You know, when you when you watch somebody really closely, you learn to shape a piece of wood by feel and experience rather than by instruction. And reading their IKEA instructions about where the shelf goes. It's a whole different way of learning and it builds a kind of it builds a kind of self-confidence and a confidence in your community and your tradition in your neighbours that go a long way to increasing social stability. We feel. Education and future proofing, we've been part of a project at BAMF Academy where they have boat building as well, but we also take folklore methodology into the school dance academy and teach the students how to do some oral history work. They do a project over the Easter break and then we facilitate them, turning it into different things like Facebook posts or Internet sites or little concerts or performances or something like that. We also have Shawna Donaldson, the wonderful singer from Huntly, going into Banff Academy this autumn, teaching them some very local songs. Again, that connecting people with their local regions and areas is very important for increasing confidence and therefore ability to move through the world, I think. Finally, a few words about David Buchan, as I mentioned, a ballad and legend scholar. He was the first director designate of the Elphinstone Institute with a broad interest in folklore. He unfortunately passed away before he was able to take up the post and we founded this lecture really to show the diversity of work that Ethnology and Folklore can do and is engaged with. Last year we talked about medical legends and the transmission of oral traditions about disease and how that can inform how health authorities and the World Health Organisation and so on can react to two disease outbreaks. This year we're talking about copyright, we're talking about tradition, what it means and who owns it. But before that, just to introduce our speaker, I will introduce the Principal of our university, Sir Ian Diamond, to just say a few words and welcome to our speaker.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond [00:13:37] [Speaks in another language] but can I just also take this opportunity to welcome you all to this lecture I know that you're going to enjoy it before I say a few words about the Elphinstone Institute, from my view, just apologise to everyone. I've already spoken to Valdimar and explained why I have to leave more or less straight away after these opening remarks and that is because many, many, many months ago, I agreed to chair a Question Time in the university the day after the American election when I knew this election was taking place, I did go back to the American authorities and ask if they could change the date of the election so that I could listen to the Buchan lecture. But sadly, I was unsuccessful in that activity. So I do have to leave. But that is a great pity to me because I would love to listen to this lecture. I do think the Elphinstone Institute is an incredibly important part of the university, I think in university, which is not

proud of its place, not proud of the culture of its place and not proud of the place of culture in an institution of this sort is not the kind of institution that we as a community would want it to be. And I'm always very proud of the work that Tom does. And it is incredibly important that where we are, we are not only proud of our northeastern culture, but that we are prepared to celebrate it and to go around the world celebrating. I know Tom did a fabulous job singing with some alumni in San Francisco just a couple of weeks ago and I think it's incredibly important that our alumni across the world remember and recognise what the Institute does. I will not spend any more time on the students because I think Tom has given a fantastic overview of the very many things that it does. For my part, it is something that I'm very proud of and will continue to be. I also think that the whole issue of culture, particularly when one can switch on a computer or a smartphone and find about anything in the world is something that we actually need to really consider. Because it seems to me if we are not proud of our culture and not, then do not try to look after it. It will disappear. When I was brought up in South Devon, I could hardly understand the words that were spoken when we went to Dartmoor. Now Dartmoor is entirely populated by London bankers and have second homes there is no such thing as a Dartmoor dialect that is distinct from the King's Kerswill dialect that I was brought up in. I don't believe that is the case up here in the Northeast and we must do everything we can to retain that, as is my view, while I believe in an organic change in cultures, I do not believe that organic change means vanilla across the world. And that is something that if we don't careful, I think we will get. And that is why I welcome Valdimar to give his lecture, because it does seem to me that we need leadership and understanding of how to move forward. And I personally, having read Valdimar's biography, I can think of no one better to speak about this whole agenda of copywriting tradition in the Internet age. It is a truly stellar CV, which includes a PhD from one of the great universities of the world, certainly not this one, but California, Berkeley, which of course aspires to be the University of Aberdeen. And then an absolutely wonderful set of not just great research, but real impacts through work through units, go through work with all kinds of organisations. So, we're incredibly privileged to have you here tonight. Thank you so much for finding time and what I know will be an unbelievably busy diary to come and talk to us. And we're looking forward very much to listening to you this evening. You're very welcome.

Valdimar Hafstein [00:18:35] Well, thank you for that very generous introduction and thank you for inviting me. I'm honoured to be asked to give the David Buchan lecture. Happy to be in Aberdeen. And so very pleased to be here at the University of the Invitation of Tom and the Elphinstone Institute. My only regret is that I didn't realise what the Principal was brought up before expressing to my great support for the Scottish team and tomorrow night's big game. The Elphinstone Institute is truly an intellectual oasis. Let me show you what I mean. Or not, see what you should be seeing on screen, I'll just act it out for single guys. What you should be seeing on screen is an incredibly impressive map of two hundred and twenty departments of ethnology and full course spread across the European continent, from the south to the north, the west to the east. It's a richly represented field at European universities, but the Elphinstone is one of two in the U.K., both of them right here in Scotland. As such, it really has unique value and it's tremendously important to the field as a whole and will remain so even after Brexit. That's just to underscore its international significance nationally. I know that it plays a leading role in scholarship on tradition, everyday life, heritage, music and an ethnography. And locally, it's exemplary in its public engagement, fulfilling that very special charge of our field of Ethnologists and Folklorists to maintain modern society's reflexive and historical self-consciousness. Now, SIEF, whose logo you would also be seeing above that map, if you will, on the screen is the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore, and it brings together some one thousand scholars in the field from all over Europe and beyond. And in

addition to a large international Congress held every two years, SIEF has 14 thematic working groups organised around particular research interests. And earlier this year, Tom and the Elphinstone Institute welcomed one of the most active groups, SIEF's Working Group, on the ritual year and organised a very successful conference here in Scotland. And Findhorn just murdered that place name, OK? Now the society now looks very much forward to the Elphinstone Institute hosting the SIEF Summer School for doctoral students of Ethnology and Folklore from the north and south and east and west of Europe. In twenty eighteen, and although the Principal is just left, let me say this for the record and the film that we are counting on the Principal's active support for that. Now, after that brief commercial interlude. Let me return to the reason you came here tonight, copyrighting tradition. Now, when the time came for Athena to be born, FISA was split open the head of us with a hammer. Athena stepped out in full armour. The modern idea of the author and his work mirrors this, a sexual genesis of Athena. With great pain and a violent flash of inspiration and creativity. And perhaps with some help from investors like Ed, the author creates the novel or the work of art alone. It's his brainchild. In contrast, in punishment for resisting assisting us in covering up one of his sexual escapades. Here made the nymph echo, unable to speak any thoughts of her own, leaving her only the ability to repeat the last words spoken by others, condemning her to eternal repetition. Beautiful, but redundant. The modern idea of folk tradition reflects echoes fate. It's a fate shared in modern times by the bearers of folk tradition, the objects of ethnography and the voices lurking behind the text and folktale collections. The fate of Echo aptly captures this long, dominant view of the creative capacities of the lack thereof and the evaluation of their words beautiful but redundant. I'll come back to the Greeks, but for now, just make a mental note of Athena and Echo and Hephaestus and his creative hammer.

[00:23:43] *Sledgehammer*, Peter Gabriel, 'So', 1986,

Valdimar Hafstein [00:23:43] Seems a shame to shut them off. When you listen to Peter Gabriel on your gramophone, you were playing a copy, you are not making one. When your fingers summoned or someone for from the piano keyboard. You were performing the piece, not copying it. That's still true, of course, if you play the piano or if you if you're a vinyl buff. But by and large, the Sound of Music has gone digital and in the digital age, culture has entered a condition where every playback, every act of consumption creates a new copy. Every time you view an image online, you create a copy and your computer's cash whether you want to or like it or not, of course, if you like, there's a lot you can do with that. The digital condition fosters new forms of creativity, musical, visual, textual whatever the medium, new forms that rely on copying, remixing and tinkering on touch-ups and mashups.

[00:24:47] Parody of Gangnam Style on YouTube by BCC Gaming, <[Hitler - Gangnam Style \(강남스타일\) Parody - YouTube](#)>.

Valdimar Hafstein [00:25:00] I was asked before hand if my any of my slides had any copyright implications while all of them do actually in one way or another, but here you see one of my favourite mashups that was viral a couple of years back, bringing together that the Gong and Gangnam Style right onto Gangnam. So the digital condition also occasion's, innovative forms of sociability known as sharing. It allows for for various creative expressions and practises, playful and serious, collaborative, distributed, incremental building on other expressions that in turn build and other expressions that build and other expressions and so on. As a consequence of this digital revolution, people's ordinary cultural consumption, everyday culture consumption has moved into the orbit of copyright law in an entirely new way. Everyday cultural practises involve making

copies all the time, remixing and sharing in ways that really strike to the core of our ideas of authorship and creativity and what is involved. One radical consequence of the digitisation of the cultural sphere, perhaps the most radical and the most under acknowledged, is the return to centre stage of models of creativity and sociability that we usually associate with traditional culture. As we tend to think of it, tradition is based on sharing. As a vernacular form of artistic communication, it's creative dynamics involved, remixing, tinkering, touching up and mashing. Tradition is peer to peer, it's distributed, it's collaborative, it's cumulative. And it's collective. Some communication scholars even claim that what we're witnessing is the end of a brief interlude in history. One in which for a handful of decades or maybe a few centuries, cultural forms were broadcast from centres of production to readers, listeners and viewers at their peripheries. Thomas Petite refers to this as the Gutenberg parenthesis, a relatively short period of exception and cultural history. Now things are returning to normal. To how they've always been in human history, we're back to sharing amongst peers, to horizontal networks of communications that are taking the place temporarily held by the vertical relation of cultural industries to consumers. Of course, that's oversimplifying by a lot. It's not like the traditional vernacular culture and communication ever went away. It's been there all along coexisting with a printing press, the media and the cultural industries, and it's not like those industries are grinding to a halt either, though you might be forgiven for thinking so, considering how loudly they complain. It's just that they don't have the dominant position that they used to. But even with this caveat in its broad strokes, I think the idea of the Gutenberg parenthesis helps to drive home an important point. Seen from this perspective. Digital culture continues, traditional traditional culture and vernacular communication between peers that throughout history has characterised most cultural production and consumption, where every act of creation is an act of creative appropriation, a reuse of another creative act that precedes it, a remix, if you will, whether it's singing a song or telling a story or building a boat. Digital culture, of course, turns to this and technologies that open up new possibilities for creativity and collaboration. Lawrence Lessig, professor of law and father of the Creative Commons movement, refers to this as the return of read write culture, replacing a temporary separation of the practise of reading as in read only file read only from writing. Digital culture is read right, like traditional culture, which is also read right or hearsay. So good news all around, right? The creative public builds a cultural democracy using digital technologies, the bastions of the culture of feel like the last bastions that we still haven't stormed. Bring your pitchfork, your sledgehammer, your laptop. The only problem with all of this, you see. Is that the laws we have weren't built for it, the law of copyright is a Gutenberg law. It's made to control the circulation of read-only culture. Copyright has no conception of traditional culture. Except as a commons, the remainder left over by copyright, and when it comes to creativity that is distributed in a cumulative, collaborative and collective, it's usefulness soon runs thin. Its whole conception of the creative act is centred on the figure of the author, the artist or the composer, the individual creator and his individual work. Instead of encouraging creativity, as it's supposed to do, as it was made to do, the effect of copyright under current circumstances can be and often is to inhibit new forms of creativity to, as it were, delay the closing of the parentheses. Now, let me illustrate. I brought a prop.

[00:31:15] 'Hani, Krummi, Hundur, Svín' played by Valdimar on a musicbox

[00:31:15] What you're hearing is a melody collected from folk tradition at the end of the 19th century. You'll be hearing it again, I promise. It's found amongst the manuscripts of the principal collector of Icelandic folk music, the Reverend Bjarni Þorsteinsson. And he published this melody in his magnum opus on Icelandic folk songs from 1906. The reverend tells his readers that of all the traditional melodies he heard as a boy, this song is

the most memorable. I picked it up, he says, at an early age, and often sang it in those days. The poem, he adds, is common currency. The Reverend Bjarni Þorsteinsson was a prolific collector and student of traditional music, and his collection is really magnificent, his sense of rhythm, however, I should say his notation practices were substandard and not just in retrospect. He transcribed every melody the same way. All in common time. That is to say, in the basic time signature of four fourths, the most common in the classical and the church music of the time. Now we know for certain that this is not the way most of the tunes were actually sung. Two decades later the next great collector of Icelandic folk music, stepped forward, composer, collector and music scholar Jón Leifs. In 1928, you see him here sitting on the steps with a singer, he toured the country and he was the first to use a revolutionary new technology cell technology to record Icelandic folk music, the wax cylinder three years prior, in nineteen twenty five, he gave a public piano concert in his living room. We played his own arrangement of three tunes from the reverend's collection of Icelandic folk songs, and the performance was a phenomenal success. One of these songs called 'Hani, Krummi, Hundur, Svín', Rooster, Raven, Dog and Pig was picked up by every choir in the country from that year to this day, and it's still hummed and or whistled by every child in Iceland, age three or more. Here's a recent performance to give you an idea.

[00:33:40] Hani, Krummi, Hundur, Svín by ???

Valdimar Hafstein [00:33:43] The second song that he performed, 'Summer's Almost Gone', was also a hit, and it's still performed fairly regularly by choirs and classical soloists. The third one didn't make as much of a splash in the pool of popular music. The older generation, however, was well familiar with it. It was the melody you just heard on the music box set to the lyrics that Reverend Bjarni noted down for it, [gives Icelandic title] 'Don't give blame too easily' and the following decades, this third tune dropped out of oral tradition, which can be fairly certain of that, because when systematic collection efforts resumed in the 1960s and 70s, not one informant ever sang this once very popular song into the folklorists tape recorders. In those same nineteen sixties, however, another composer named Jón Asgeirsson took a course for music teachers and as part of the coursework, he arranged a folk song for all the teachers gathered there to sing together. He flipped open the Reverend Bjarni collection from 1996 and from its pages, he selected our song, this one here.

[00:35:00] 'Hani, Krummi, Hundur, Svín' played by Valdimar on a musicbox

[00:35:00] His arrangement, however, departs from the notation of a good reverend in several ways, most of the minor, but four of them worth noting. First, like Jón Liefs before him, he changed the metre from common time of 4/4 to the time signature of 4/4 3/4 4/4 2/4. And in so doing, we might say he really undid the reverend's rearrangement into common time and shifted the melody back to a rhythm that was actually traditional. This is the same rhythm as you just heard that choir perform. A rhythm that was actually in tradition. And this is the same time signature to which you Jón Liefs sets the big this biggest hit from his living room concert. Now, second thing that Jón Asgeirsson did arranging this song for the music teachers to sing was to shift around a few notes at the end of the tune, again, in keeping with standard practise in the folk musical tradition, where singers would embellish or flourish the end of each verse. Third, he replaced the lyrics. But the Reverend Bjarni had noted with another traditional poem, one about love, lost love and heartbreak, often attributed to Rósa Guðmundsdóttir or 'Rosa from Waters End', who passed away in eighteen fifty five. Once again, we might say that in this, Jón helps to move the song out of the reverend's notation and into something that more closely

resembles oral tradition, particularly melodies in oral tradition, were never associated with particular lyrics. The lyrics were interchangeable or the melodies were interchangeable for the lyrics, if you like. One way to put this is to say that performers had the poems and one side of their brain and the tunes on the other side and then they mash them together according to whim or occasion. This is traditional culture at work, by the way, this is read right culture here say this is creativity on the outside of the Gutenberg parenthesis. This is a mashup. It's normal. This is how we usually operate. The dynamics of traditional culture are those of the riff or the remix. Now, in Jón Asgeirsson's arrangement, however, the song is even named for the particular lyrics that he chose and for their poet 'Vísur Vatnsenda Rósu' 'The Poems of Rosa from Waters end'. The fourth and final important way in which Jón Asgeirsson, his arrangement, departs from the reverend's notation matters most. After the folk melody has been sung through once and before it is repeated again, he added a bridge, a contrasting B section if you will. So instead of the traditional AAA structure where the same tune is sung over and over and over again with minor variations, his arrangement has an ABA structure where A is in the minor key and B is in the major. Now, in composing the bridge or the B section, Jón Asgeirsson's nevertheless stayed very close to the musical phrasing of folk tradition. In fact, the B section sounds very much like to other folk songs on the next page of the reverend's collection. So this is how – I'll let you hear now – how Jón Asgeirsson's arrangement sounds performed by the Choir of [???] College, my alma mater.

[00:38:38] Jón Asgeirsson's arrangement of the Icelandic traditional tune which he titled 'Vísur Vatnsenda Rósu'

Valdimar Hafstein [00:40:27] Now, this is how I first encountered the song in 1990 through my very brief musical career singing bass with a school choir. In the first two and a half, or three decades Jón Asgeirsson's, arranged the melody, it led a pretty unremarkable existence as part of the Icelandic choral repertoire. It was released occasionally on records featuring choir music or classical female soloists, accompanied by piano eight times in all. In each case, strictly following your Jón Asgeirsson's notation or arrangement. But then shortly after I first heard it and sang it in nineteen ninety, the tune hit the big time. No thanks to me, I'm afraid. It broke out of the choir room and into popular tradition once again, this time as a lullaby. It entered the nursery room and the preschools and then on the wings of the world music folk revival of the nineteen nineties and two thousands, it was propelled into pop music, tourist productions, radio airtime, advertising and even the silver screen. A full century after the Reverend Bjarni Þorsteinsson collected the tune of folk tradition. Sixty five years after the composer collector Jón Liefs performed his piano arrangement, the song in his living room concert three decades after Jón Asgeirsson arranged the song for a choir of music teachers. After all these years, it was at long last and suddenly a big hit. Now, the reason I'm telling you all this is what comes next, so in nineteen ninety five Jón Asgeirsson, our composer who arranged this for the choir music teachers, attended the premiere of a feature length film about the life of Jón Liefs, the one who gave it in his living room concert in nineteen twenty five about his life and his musical career.

[00:43:50] Clip from the Soundtrack of 'Tears of Stone' featuring the melody in 'Vísur Vatnsenda Rósu'

Valdimar Hafstein [00:43:50] It's a good film if you have the chance to come across it at some point, it's a fairly adventurous or rather eventful life, married into a Jewish family in Germany in the nineteen thirties and all that came from that and the music is good and you'll recognise the music in the trailer. Our melody is a leitmotif in the film score, which

was arranged and in part composed by yet another prominent Icelandic composer, Hjalmar Helgi Ragnarsson, this gentleman here. Not the time Hjalmar Ragnarsson was the chairman of the Association of Icelandic Artists, he later became the chancellor of the Icelandic Academy of Arts. So in other words, all these composers are very big players on the cultural scene in the country. Now, as the final credits for the film rolled over the screen, our song appeared listed as a folk song. And this is where the plot thickens, Jón Asgeirsson left the film in a film theatre in a hurry that night, feeling cheated. When he came home, he wrote an open letter to his colleague Hjalmar Ragnarsson, who had scored the film. The letter was published the very following morning, as won Jón Asgeirsson happened to also be the main music critic for the biggest newspaper in the country. It was followed. It was published the very following morning, and it accuses Ragnarsson, of outright theft and indignity of artistic proportions. A polemic ensued and it involved not only these two composers, but several other parties, other composers, the film directors, lawyers, the family members, even. Asgeirsson referred the matter to Iceland's music rights organisation, collective music rights organisation called [?]. And it was a tough spot for the managers of [?] to find themselves in. Thrown in the middle of a no holds barred public fight between two of its most respected senior members, Jón Asgeirsson and Hjalmar Ragnarsson, where not only their rights, but also their honour was at stake, a fight that ironically revolved around a film about the composer who had personally founded the music rights organisation [?] in nineteen forty eight. Our friend Jón Liefs, who had worked harder than anyone else to secure the place of copyright in Icelandic music to create a steady source of income for composers lives, was legendary for actually stopping funerals, where music was performed without permission and payment of royalties. Now, as you know, your life's worked extensively with folk songs in the first half of the 20th century, what I have yet to add is that Jón Liefs never had any qualms about registering these works in his own name and claiming full copyright on them. Of course, this was common practice at the time in the last decades of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century. From Bela Bartok, and Zoltan Kodaly in Hungary to Edvard Grieg in Norway and from Jón Liefs in Iceland, Ralph Vaughan Williams in England to Daniel Alomia Robles and Peru. These collectors composers promoted musical folk tradition, they recorded it and valorised it, some of them wrote on it. But its most important value for them was a source not only as a source, not only of inspiration, but a whole melodies and rhythms and musical forms that they drew on and incorporated into their own compositions. They translated music from the popular to the classical tradition. They transferred it between social classes, from the rural proletariat to the bourgeoisie and the cultured middle classes, from the field to the concert hall. Now, which Scottish composer should be added to this Hall of Fame? All the experts are here, right? I figured, Alexander Mackenzie, is that that a good candidate? All right. You'll tell me afterwards. Now, in the case of our melody. Jón Asgeirsson's arrangement in the 1960s brought a popular success in the 1990s. Were it not for this guy, it's likely the song would now be found only on the pages of the eighty six collection and not on the lips of half the country's population. Thanks to him, a song about lost love entered the choir chamber and then the nursery from there, others carried in film theatres onto the TV screen and into world music fame. But they did so without Jón Asgeirsson's permission and without expressly crediting him as the composer, they performed it always on the understanding and because it was a folk song. In addition to Hjalmar Ragnarsson and the film producers, Jón Asgeirsson's and his lawyers took on several other artists in the 10 year period from nineteen ninety five to two thousand five, musicians who arranged and recorded the song on everything from tourist CDs to the actual designer of the music box. And from film to world music productions. The Icelandic artist Bjork collaborated with French composer Hector Zazou on his album, his world music album, 'Chanson des Mers Froids' or 'Songs from the Cold Seas' that Sony released in nineteen ninety five featuring traditional folk songs from the

Arctic, from Alaska, Newfoundland, Greenland, Iceland, Japan and Scandinavia, including shamanic incantations and indigenous lullabies from Intuits, Ainu and Yakuts and as you might have guessed, Bjork performed our song on the album. It was the album's most successful single and it was even licensed for use in TV commercials in the US.

[00:49:41] US advert featuring 'Vísur Vatnsenda Rósu' by Hector Zazou and Bjork

Voiceover I'm smarter than someone who wants to steal money from my family, my. Oh, my my words can stop someone from hurting feelings. I am stronger than a 250 pound child molester who's brought to you by tri state quality Ford dealers and St. Barnabas Hospital. We urge you to help protect our children.

Valdimar Hafstein [00:50:10] Heard that! Think about the children. Jón Asgeirsson's had only one problem with all of this, he wasn't credited. He didn't get royalties for the commercial use of what he now maintained was actually not a folk song at all, but a song that he had composed. So when [?], a graduate student of mine and a colleague called him up some years ago. He introduced himself and he explained that he was looking into folk songs and copyright. And proceeded to request an interview with Jón about our song. The first thing that Jón said on the telephone was, well, actually, this is not a folk song. Now, the odd thing is that he's not alone in this opinion that the tune is not or rather that the tune is no longer a traditional tune. In nineteen ninety seven, the music rights organisation [?] referred the question of his authorship to two musical experts. These handed down the verdict in short order based on what I will just characterise as questionable criteria and leave it at that. Yes, they said this song is, for all practical purposes, the creation of Jón Asgeirsson – an original creation. Not withstanding the fact that he was born only in nineteen twenty eight, three years after Jón Liefs publicly performed the song in his Living Room concert, twenty two years after the good Reverend published it in his compendium of Icelandic folk songs and at least a good half century after that Reverend learnt the song as a young lad, the eighteen sixties and seventies. Now, at the top of the screen, you see a manuscript in Jón's own hand from the 1960s. Where at the top right, the song is credited as an Icelandic folk song arranged by Jón Asgeirsson. At the bottom of the screen, you see printed music from that two thousand five. The reference to folk tradition has vanished. Jón Asgeirsson is credited as the composer at the bottom of the page, there's a copyright notice, 'All rights reserved in the name of Jón Asgeirsson'. Legally, that is where things still stand. The case was never heard by a court Bkork, Hector Zazou and Sony settled disputes with an allegation out of court, as did the composer of the film score, Hjalmar Ragnarsson. A number of other artists and labels have done the same. This means that no court has heard the case and no formal ruling has been handed down. I've spoken to artists who have attempted to contest Jón Asgeirsson's authorship and copyright in the melody before a court. But lawyers have advised them that because they are not themselves claiming copyright in the song and to be its authors, they will not be considered rightful parties to the case. In other words, since they can't claim that Jón Asgeirsson's is appropriating their personal intellectual property, they have no case or not a party to it. The problem here is that nobody, but nobody is legally entitled to represent the musical tradition or the public domain, no person or legal entity can claim a lawful interest. This is a legal no man's land. And this I find exciting. The dispute surrounding this lullaby, Vísur Vatnsenda Rósu, is fascinating to me for what it reveals about the shifting boundaries between authorship and its remainder of its outside. It's only one out of thousands of cases like it worldwide that have been reported from China and Norway, from the Solomon Islands and Ghana, from Greenland and Peru, Bolivia, Bulgaria, France, New Zealand and so on and so forth. And these cases concern not only music but there are also about traditional patterns and designs, dance

narratives and medicinal knowledge, but music and medicine are the two most hotly debated arenas because that's where the money is and to top dollar industries with a rather big profit margin. The pharmaceutical industry and the world music industry. Both base their profits on intellectual property rights, both spend a lot of resources on legal departments to defend their rights and on lobbyists who extend the rights. When it comes to the collective resources that they exploit, however, traditional knowledge, traditional music, there is no one there to represent the other side. Folk tradition cannot retain a lawyer. So, for over a decade, I've been tracking the work of an Intergovernmental Committee of the World Intellectual Property Organisation in Geneva WIPO, and I've carried out field work at many of its meetings and interviewed various actors. I apologise for the self-indulgence, but this is supposed to represent my field work credentials of having been there. Established in the year 2000 WIPO's Committee on Intellectual Property, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore owes its existence to dissatisfaction among poorer countries with a global imbalance of the intellectual property system. And to pressure from developing states and indigenous NGOs. The problem at the heart of the work of this committee is that the system of intellectual property protection, which is supposed to encourage creativity and innovation. Systematically excludes the knowledge and creativity of a rather large portion of humanity. In order to qualify for copyright protection, a work of art, a design or a piece of music has to be an original creation. And likewise, in order to be granted patent protection technology and know how to pass the test of novelty and involve an inventive step. Now, by means of criteria like these traditional knowledge, traditional creative expressions are ruled out on principle. Now leave the WIPO ethnography aside for today and I want to present instead a critical history of critical genealogy of this present conundrum we find. And that genealogy takes us back into the age of print, back into the Gutenberg parenthesis, if you will. The major milestone in the international history of copyright is the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, signed in eighteen eighty six. States that ratify the Berne Convention must guarantee the same level of protection to authors from other signatory countries as their national copyright laws grant to their own subjects. And they must also meet certain minimum standards in their national laws on author's rights. The Berne Convention has been revised several times since it was first adopted and one such revision from nineteen sixty seven concerns folklore. As part of (this is nineteen sixties, this is the age of decolonisation, of the entry of a plethora of new countries into the UN system with votes and a say in what was happening) and so it's part of a development agenda. At the revision conference in Stockholm that year, the Indian delegation proposed to extend the scope of the Berne Convention to include folklore and scope of protection, a radical proposal. As folk tradition and folk tradition bearers had never before been considered appropriate beneficiaries of copyright. However, the special working group charged with proposing a text was stumped. It claimed at the end of the day that it couldn't establish what the devil folklore really was or even arrive at a reasonable definition of it with any consensus. But even so, its work, its deliberations left a trace in international law. The fruits of its labour are found in the rather opaque paragraph added to Article 15 and adapted in Stockholm in nineteen sixty seven, paragraph four. In the case of unpublished works, where the identity of the author is unknown but there was ever ground to presume there is a national of a country of the union that is a convention, it shall be a matter for legislation in that country to designate the competent authority who shall represent the author and shall be entitled to protect and enforce his rights in the countries of the union. Step back and think about that. So indivisible is copyright from the norms of authorship, that the Berne Convention can imagine traditional expression only as the work of an unknown author. In other words, by this reckoning, it is not so much the case that say, Andersen, a great fairy tale writer, adopted stories from oral tradition, which he did, the stories that he himself said that he heard in the spinning room of his youth. Really, it's the

oral storytellers, the old women in the spin room who repeat the original compositions of Anderson's colleagues and the Authors Guild authors whose names the vagaries of history have separated from the stories that they composed. Now, this is symptomatic, the concept of creativity of creative agency that underpins our modern regimes of copyright or intellectual property. The concept of how things are created is modelled on solitary genius, canonised in international law in the 19th and 20th centuries. This romantic norm has no patience for cultural processes or for expressions developed in a more diffuse, incremental and collective manner where it's impossible to fix specific steps like invention or authorship at a given point in time and assign it to one biological person. Now, Article 15/4 further stipulates that it shall be a matter for legislation in that country to designate the competent authority which shall represent the author and shall be entitled to protect and enforce his rights in the countries of the union. Now, what does this mean? After recasting tradition, after recasting folklore in terms that are legible onto copyright regimes, that makes sense under copyright regimes. The special working group in Stockholm realises that actually something has been lost in translation. That cast creative agency and traditional expression and folklore in the mould of the universal individual subject as the unpublished work of an unknown author. The result is that we have a legal subject that has no recourse to representation. The subject is as void of a real reference as the empty subject 'it' in the phrase it's raining. What's raining? It's another empty subject, right? The convention, therefore hastens to fill that empty subject with the will of the state, which shall represent the author. Now, the Berne Convention illustrates the relationship between copyright and traditional culture, the paradox that ties the one to the other while keeping them always apart has been the ongoing concern of the World Intellectual Property Organisation since its founding. The solution adopted by Article 15/4 for the Berne Convention has not proved helpful to translate the collective, cumulative and distributed creative agency of folk tradition by the concept of an unknown author. The unknown author from Article 15/4 is not unknown to us because his identity is lost. The unknown author is unknown to us because he does not exist. He's a legal fiction. And in fact, only one country, India, has actively taken this clause up into its national copyright laws and again in India, even in India, does not prove useful, has been decided on this basis. Now, one of the enduring legacies of the Grimm brothers and of their contemporaries, lies in how they mapped out this domain of collective creativity. And their work really inscribed that domain on the scholarly agenda. And their collections and all the countless collections of folk tales and legends that followed in their wake helped to make the existence of this domain of collective creation self evident to us all. We're all brought up thinking of it as a natural thing. It's best understood, I think, as a domain within a new discursive regime in the 18th and 19th century whose figure is the author. In the same period, a legal regime took shape that complemented this regime for governing discourse, the law of copyright. In this context, we may say that the Grimms helped to give a shape to these regimes by devising an instrument to carve up various different texts, a discursive field, and to authored works on the one hand and non authored texts on the other, copyrighted works and the public domain. In the dominant understanding of creativity in the 19th century, men penned original works, bourgeois men, to be more precise or aristocrats or even the odd social climber like Anderson, men ruled in the domain of authorship. The place of women was in the outside, the constitutive outside of that domain in the residues of authorship and what came to be known as folklore, a folk tradition. Women were portrayed not as authors, but as gossip's, their artistry was oral, not literary. They didn't create originals, they copied and they repeated and they shared their outsider status with parents of children with colonial populations. Women, children and peasants all come together in the genre of the folktale as it was modelled in the Grimms folktale collection 'Kinder und Hausmaerchen' culled from its peasant sources and told in the bourgeois nursery and the heart of the private sphere, dominion of women. Told by a mother or better yet by a grandmother to a group of

children. The peasants were represented as naive and childlike, and so were the women. Now this imagery is clearly a product of a paternalistic and a patriarchal relationship to those dominated in society, to the subaltern, if you like. All these groups, the peasants, the women, the children are imagined collectively rather than individually, unlike the authors of the time and unlike the editors of folktale collections, storytellers are rarely mentioned by name in any of the photo collections edited and published in the 19th and most of the 20th century, not by the Grimms and not in the other collections that followed in their wake. Instead, storytellers figure out ways as collective sources, the area where they live is often mentioned. And still, we are led to assume their class and very often their gender. Now there is, however, an important exception that illustrates this rule, and we owe it to the Grimms. Not only did the Grimms map out this domain of collective creativity folklore, they also illustrate a creative agency that to mean literally they give a face to what I've called the constant muse. The face of the folk from whom the tales emanate is the face of Dorothea Viehmännin, the Grimms, as the Grimms presented her to their readers in the second volume of 'Kinder und Hausmaerchen' from eighteen fifteen and I quote their introduction. "One of these happy pieces of good fortune was the acquaintance with a peasant woman from the village of Zwern, near Kassel. Through her, we acquired a good part of the tales that are published here. This woman, still vigorous and not much over 50, is called Viehmännin. She has a firmly set, pleasant face with bright, clear eyes and was probably beautiful when she was young. She has these stories clearly in mind, a gift which she says is not given to everyone. Now, as grim scholars have pointed out. The brothers tailed Viehmännin to suit an idealised image of their contributors, the image that the readers were to carry away with them from their collection, literally. So as their portrait illustrated, the second volume of the grim Grimm's tales as of eighteen nineteen, drawn by a third brother, Ludwig Emil Grimm. Now, Dorothea Viehmännin's portrait really struck a chord. When Edgar Taylor translated the Grimm's collection of tales into English, he published a selection or a best seller that he called 'Gammer Grethel'. Pictured on the title page, old Grethel was none other than Dorothea Viehmännin. Her features slightly softened. Whom Taylor had turned into a source for all the Grimm's tales and described as, quote unquote, an honest, good-humoured farmer's wife who a while ago lived far off in Germany and knew all the good stories told in that country. Now, with echoes of the 'One Thousand and One Nights 'Scheherazade', Gammer Grethel tells the stories in Taylor's books on 12 successive evenings. Now, Dorothea Viehmännin the person died near the end of 18 15, but over the next century, her name and her image travelled with the Grimms tales around the world and became synonymous with folk tradition. It helped, of course, that in a way, she was already well known, if by another name. Dorothea Viehmännin so easily transformed into Gammer Grethel because the Grimms presented her from the outset as an idealised storyteller, and that ideal went back at least as far as Charles Perrault's sixteen ninety seven collection 'Contes de ma Mère l'Oye' or 'Mother Goose', an older woman and peasant clothing is pictured and Perrault's Frontispiece. Mother Goose stood in model for countless frontispiece to 19th century collections of fairy tales, as Maria Tatar has shown. The Frontispiece pictures the constant muse. Who is a muse for creative writers and authors who turn her work and turn tradition into copyrighted original pieces. Perhaps not changing very much at all. So when Andersen credits the old women in the spinning room, the poor old women, the spinning room with revealing to him, quote unquote, a world as rich as that of the thousand and one nights, Anderson is actually inscribing himself into a time worn tradition, no less so than when his version of Lucky Hands or the Princess on the Pea is published based on something already published in other Folktale collections, so like Andersen's old women, Perrault's Mother Goose is seated by a seated by a spindle, and so are countless other anonymous storytellers pictured in fairy tale collections in the 19th century and to this day. An image of an elderly peasant woman by a spindle or a spinning wheel became the entry point to the

world of printed fairy tales. And so magical transformation carries over from folklore to the folklore about folklore or the metafolklore. Mother Goose transforms magically to Dorothea Viehmännin, who becomes Gammer Grethel, who becomes the 'Maerchen Mutterchen', the fairy tale mother and so on. By the time Andersen reminisces in his autobiography about the old women in the spinning room at whose feet he sat as a child, the poor old woman with a spindle is already a ubiquitous icon in fairy tale literature. Now, if Dorothea Viehmännin is one of the many avatars of Mother Goose, she is no doubt the one best known by name. In 1819, her face in Ludwig Grimm's Frontispiece was still in part her own, that of the woman from Zwern we had sketched in the 1814 a year after his brothers came into contact with her, but in eighteen thirty seven in the third edition of the same collection of *Kinder und Hausmaerchen* two years before Taylor published *Gammer Grethel*, a legend appears in large print below her portrait. It's one word 'Maerchen Frau' 'Fairytale Lady'. This transformation from the individual to the generic is the birthmark of the constant muse, she is constant because she is dehistoricised. No one in particular, she can stand in for everyone. She is a muse because she is denied creative agency as a vessel of tradition she gives inspiration to others, the authors and the poets who create artistic tales, 'Kunstmaerchen' from the 'Volksmaerchen, 'Kunstpoesie' from the 'Naturpoesie'. She is the counterpart to the author who represents all that she does not who is male, not female, bourgeois, not a peasant, educated, not simple, cosmopolitan and not parochial, original and not a faithful imitator, skilled only in reproducing tradition. Above all, the author is an individual, not a face, merely standing in for a collective. Ludwig Katzenstein fabulous image from eighteen ninety two juxtaposes Grimm's Frontispiece of Viehmännin with a famous portrait of the Brothers Grimm and imbeds both in a stark scene from visual folklore. The scientific collectors, scholars and editors are portrayed face to face with a fork sitting in Dorothea Viehmännin's home and hanging on their every word, surrounded by well-behaved children and poultry, both listening eagerly. These editors, I think, occupy an interesting position in between the folk and the author in the interstices between two discursive domains and one might say in the wound opened up by their division between folk tradition, authorship, by the rupture between tradition and modernity, if you like. The collector/editor is a certified translator between these domains. He's an adventurer travelling into the hinterlands of tradition to cull its last remaining treasures and to carry them back across the ontological borders of modernity. As a matter of fact, as a matter of the historical record, that is, it was Dorothea Viehmännin who paid visits to the Grimms in their home and not the other way around. She was the border crossing adventure. As far as we know, they never set foot in their home. But Katzenstein illustration from 1892 to much later reflects late 19th century opinion on the activities of the Grimms, its inverted representation of historical events speaks to the stability of our regime, of authorship by the end of 19th century, how firmly the positions of the folk, the author and the collector/editor had settled by then. So this is my genealogy and a genealogy like the ones whose outlines I've been sketching this evening. Helps, I think, to investigate the various systems of subjection that are hidden in plain view in our legal regimes and our discursive regimes. The point is to uncover layers of past meanings and concepts that the institution of authorship and the institution of copyright have invested with power. Concepts that are at work in the world every day and govern the way texts and sounds circulate and images, so in so doing, we shed critical light on those understandings of creativity that really control the circulation of culture. And we open the door, hopefully, or that is a point to alternative ways of conceiving creative agency, how creation happens, moving beyond these two figures of the author and the folk. In an age of file sharing and peer to peer networking of social media and Web 2.0 of mash ups and remixes, we really need a new language to speak of creation, to speak of creative agency, how it happens, who does it? Historically, folklore offered an alternative to authorship folklore is peer to peer, it's collaborative, it's cumulative. But the choice between these two options is just not

satisfactory. We should not accept it uncritically. We have to try to imagine creativity differently and to think in other terms about creative processes that are collective, incremental and distributed in space and time, because such creative processes are, in fact, all around us. They are the norm. They are not the exception. How many people do you imagine wrote the text on the back of the box of cereal you have for breakfast? How many did the graphic illustration? How many people did it take to grow to create the movie you watched last night? The language of folklore almost captures creative processes and products like these more accurately than the language of authorship. Neither is accurate. However, I hasten to add, both are patently false because each is based on the exclusion of the other – on the opposite. But to construct a new language, we need first to understand the concepts, the discourse of grid we are revising so we don't wind up reproducing the same old antagonisms with a new vocabulary. What we need is not a new vocabulary, but a new grammar and alternative grammar of creativity and a renewed understanding of how cultural expressions come into being are modified, changed and circulate. So here is a final thought. How about the collector/editor? Could we model an alternative understanding of creative agency on the figure of the folklorist? Now, notwithstanding the immodesty of such a proposal, what possibilities would such an understanding open up, what new perspectives? What if every cultural actor, individual, collective is acting much like the Brothers Grimm when they collected and compiled and published the *Kinder und Hausmaerchen*? The rapper, the storyteller, the singer, the author, the programmer, the poet. The mash up and contributed to YouTube, the guy cracking jokes at the office party. The student plagiarising another paper, everyone, that is what if we think of culture as a republic of editors, some of them more like Jacob, the scientist of the two brothers, others more artistically inclined, like Wilhelm. We would be taking away from authorship and folk tradition their powerful hold on our imaginations, because their power in effect depends on their dichotomous relation and their exclusion of one another. By reframing the interstitial position as the central category, we challenge the untenable dichotomy that still channels our understanding of creation. In redefining the borderlands as the centre, we defined the author and the folk as peripheral concepts, as the exceptions, not the norms. Or better yet, as fictional labels on either end of a spectrum with most texts, most music, most images falling not on either end but somewhere in between. And the in-between is the domain of the collector editor who builds on previous creations, so this is one perspective on creativity and the circulation of culture. As such, it is neither true or false. It's only helpful or unhelpful. It might not have flattered, Andersen, and it might not make her a lullaby composer, Jón Asgeirsson, too happy. But to me, at least, the curious case of melodies that are composed a century after their first collected makes more sense if we consider their historical trajectories and transformations as a series of editorial interventions. Now, in nineteen ninety seven, my mentor, the folklorist Alan Dundes, asked, who are the folk? His answer was radical at the time and still rings true amongst others, we are. But so is everyone else. But why not turn it around? The inverse is equally true, I think. Who are the folklorists, who are the Grimms? Well, amongst others we are. But so is everybody else. I'm proposing, in other words, an alternative model of creativity, a model in which creation is not a single act, but a cumulative process, a model in which creative acts don't exist outside of history, but are historical. They take place over time. In the beginning, God created heaven, earth is still the model for creation, outside of history. A model in which creative agency is not modelled as individual. But as collective or social with the figures of the author and the folk are not mistaken for empirical realities, we provide instead to imaginary points on the compass of creative agency like East and West. They give a name to cardinal directions with reference to which we can map out different places or different texts and describe the relationship to one another, East and West are not themselves places. They describe a relation. You can go west, but you will never be west. There was always more west to the west of the west. Now, let's go

back to the Greeks where we began, remember? The most interesting figure in this slide, I would suggest, is neither Zeus nor Echo nor even Athena. It is...I wonder if I have a point. Yes, it's this guy here at Hephaestus. Wielding his hammer Hephaestus is an agent of creative destruction, is a master craftsman, is a bricoleur par excellence. He takes stuff and with his tools he makes new stuff out of it. Nothing comes from nothing. Hephaestus is a collector editor of things, his last name, his grim.

[01:22:22] *Sledgehammer*, Peter Gabriel, 'So', 1986,

Now, his hammer, his hammer itself, is a creation that is distributed, incremental, social, it's historical, it took place over time. No one would dream of searching for the author of The Hammer. The absurdity of that proposal, I think, is self-evident to us all. So why should tax or sounds or images be any different? I would also suggest that the hammer is a tool of critical scholarship with this hammer, Hephaestus cracks open the skull of the author figure whose death certificate a literary scholar, Roland Barthes, issued 50 years ago, already in his essay on the death of the author. But now, now let's use his hammer to craft something interesting and useful from the pieces of the skull. To end again in mythology but going north this time to my native Iceland and the Eddas. The sky was actually crafted from the skull of the primaeval giant. Can we do something like that with the author? Thank you.

Voiceover [01:24:32] This podcast is brought to you by the University of Aberdeen.