



# **Sustainable Staff Challenges for Professional Services**

**Lydia Crow**

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# Professional Services Identity Folklore

Thoughts and observations about the experiences of, and challenges facing, Professional Services staff in the twenty-first century environment, and their role in Higher Education communities.

The role of identity and its importance in building cohesive educational communities which draw on the professional expertise of each and every individual.

# Introductions

**Personal**  
**Professional**  
**Academic**  
**Representation**

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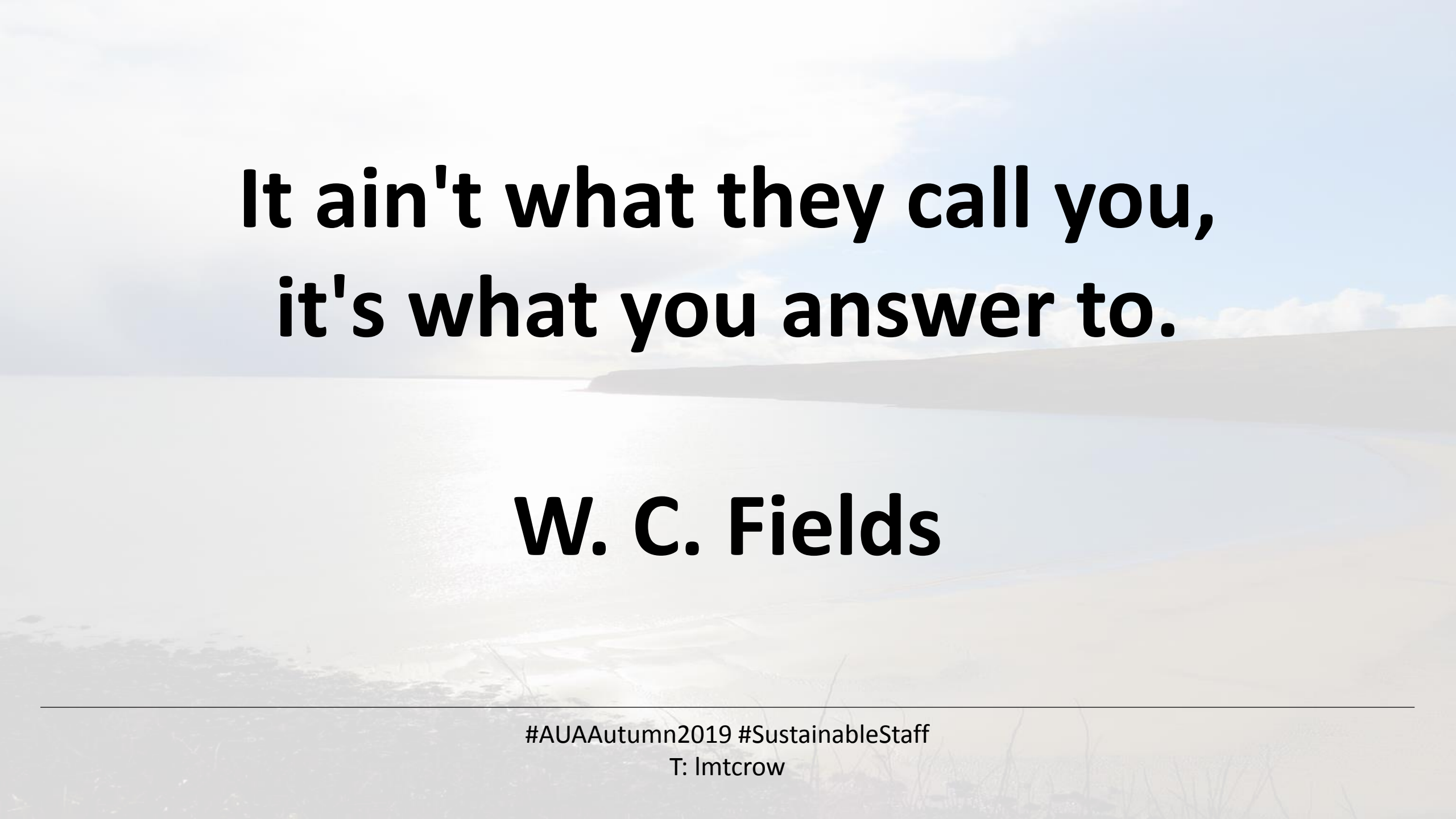
# Professional Services

Language  
Resources  
Resilience

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**It ain't what they call you,  
it's what you answer to.**

**W. C. Fields**

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# Times Higher Education

“It is interesting that most companies are moving to an agile workforce that completes its work without having to show presence in the workplace yet the University is moving backwards in time.

I wonder what the overseers will do when my 40 hours is completed by the end of the day on Wednesday because of my intense workload in teaching and research. And the fact that I don't have the luxury as do admin staff of taking 6 weeks of holiday a year or would never complete my job.

We faculty work for students and for those who fund our research, yet this policy is set up so that admin staff will have the control over us they so desire. We do not work for them. They are interested in the lowest levels of administrivia to justify their existence and would have us complete paperwork all day to demonstrate our value to them.”

Comment on Times Higher Education Article 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016

Initially attributed to a University of Edinburgh academic (later anonymised)

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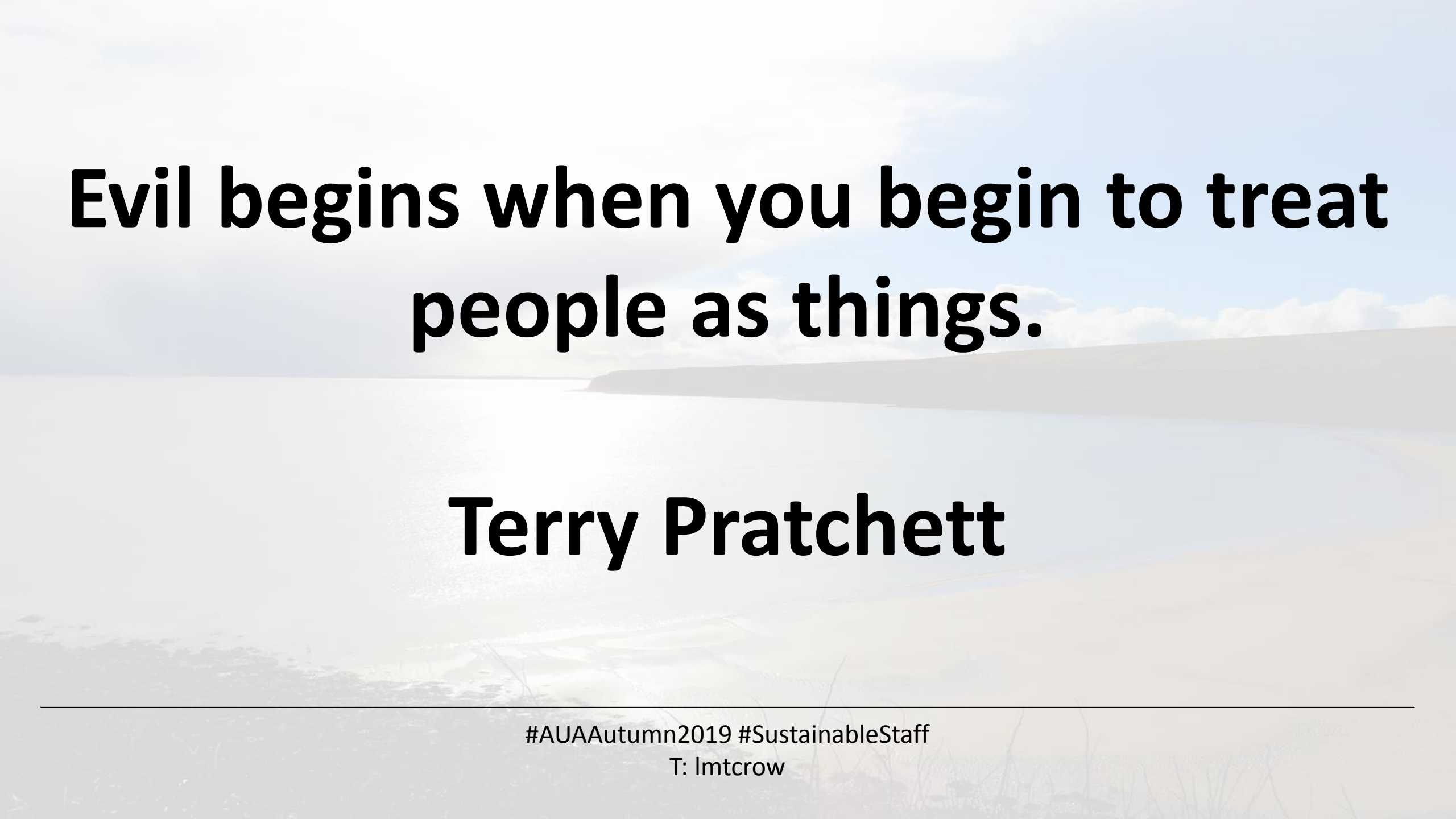
**For a moment, nothing happened.  
Then, after a second or so, nothing  
continued to happen.**

**Douglas Adams**

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**Evil begins when you begin to treat  
people as things.**

**Terry Pratchett**

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# Identity

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# Folklore

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# What is Folklore?

“Folklore **includes** myths, legends, folktales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessings, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, taunts, teases, toasts, tongue-twisters, and greeting and leave-taking formulas (e.g., See you later, alligator). It also includes folk costume, folk dance, folk drama (and mime), folk art, folk belief (or superstition), folk medicine, folk instrumental music (e.g., fiddle tunes), folksongs (e.g., lullabies, ballads), folk speech (e.g., slang), folk similes (e.g., as blind as a bat), folk metaphors (e.g., to paint the town red), and names (nicknames and place names). Folk poetry ranges from oral epics to autograph-book verse, epitaphs, latrinalia (writings on the walls of public bathrooms), limericks, ball-bouncing rhymes, jump-rope rhymes, finger and toe rhymes, dandling rhymes (bouncing children on the knee), counting-out rhymes (to determine who will be ‘it’ in games), and nursery rhymes. The list of folklore forms also contains games; gestures; symbols; prayers (e.g., graces); practical jokes; folk etymologies; food recipes; quilt and embroidery designs; house, barn and fence types; street vendor’s cries; and even the traditional conventional sounds used to summon animals or to give them commands. There are such minor forms as mnemonic devices (e.g., the name Roy G Biv to remember the colors of the spectrum in order), envelope sealers (e.g., SWAK – Sealed With A Kiss), and the traditional comments made after body emissions (e.g., after burps and sneezes). There are such major forms as festivals and special day (or holiday) customs (e.g., Christmas, Halloween, and birthday). **This list provides a sampling of the forms of folklore. It does not include all forms.**”

Alan Dundes

Dundes, A., 1965. What is Folklore? In A. Dundes, ed. *The Study of Folklore*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc, pp. 1–6.

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# Why is Folklore Important?

“My argument will be that the performance of folklore – whether it provides us with delight and amusement or causes us to fear and tremble – is one of our most fundamental human activities. The study of folklore, therefore, is not just a pleasant pastime useful primarily for whiling away idle moments. Rather, it is centrally and crucially important in our attempts to understand our own behavior and that of our fellow human beings.”

William Wilson

Wilson, W.A., 1981. On Being Human : The Folklore of Mormon Missionaries. In *Utah State University Faculty Honor Lectures*. p. Paper 60.

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# Folklore and Identity

“Identity expresses a mutual relationship by connoting both a persistent selfsameness and a persistent sharing of an essential character with other. It is in the area of "essential character with others" that folklorists can contribute something to the understanding of identity.”

Alan Dundes

Dundes, A., 1984. Defining Identity through Folklore (Abstract). *Journal of Folklore Research*, 21(2), pp.149–152.

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# Folklore and the University

“By contrast, in a recent essay about her experiences as a dean Polly Stewart identifies specific skills of the folklorist that can be applied in an academic administrative setting to improve organizational functioning and life at work. "One important skill is analytical," helping faculty and administrators "get past the esoteric-exoteric barriers ... obviously impeding communication," she writes. In addition, "a folklorist in the administration can help administrative colleagues understand the power of an institution's symbology and its effects upon faculty." Third are interactional skills associated with fieldwork on expressive behavior through the use of which one can uncover organization members' feelings, attitudes, and perceptions of one another.”

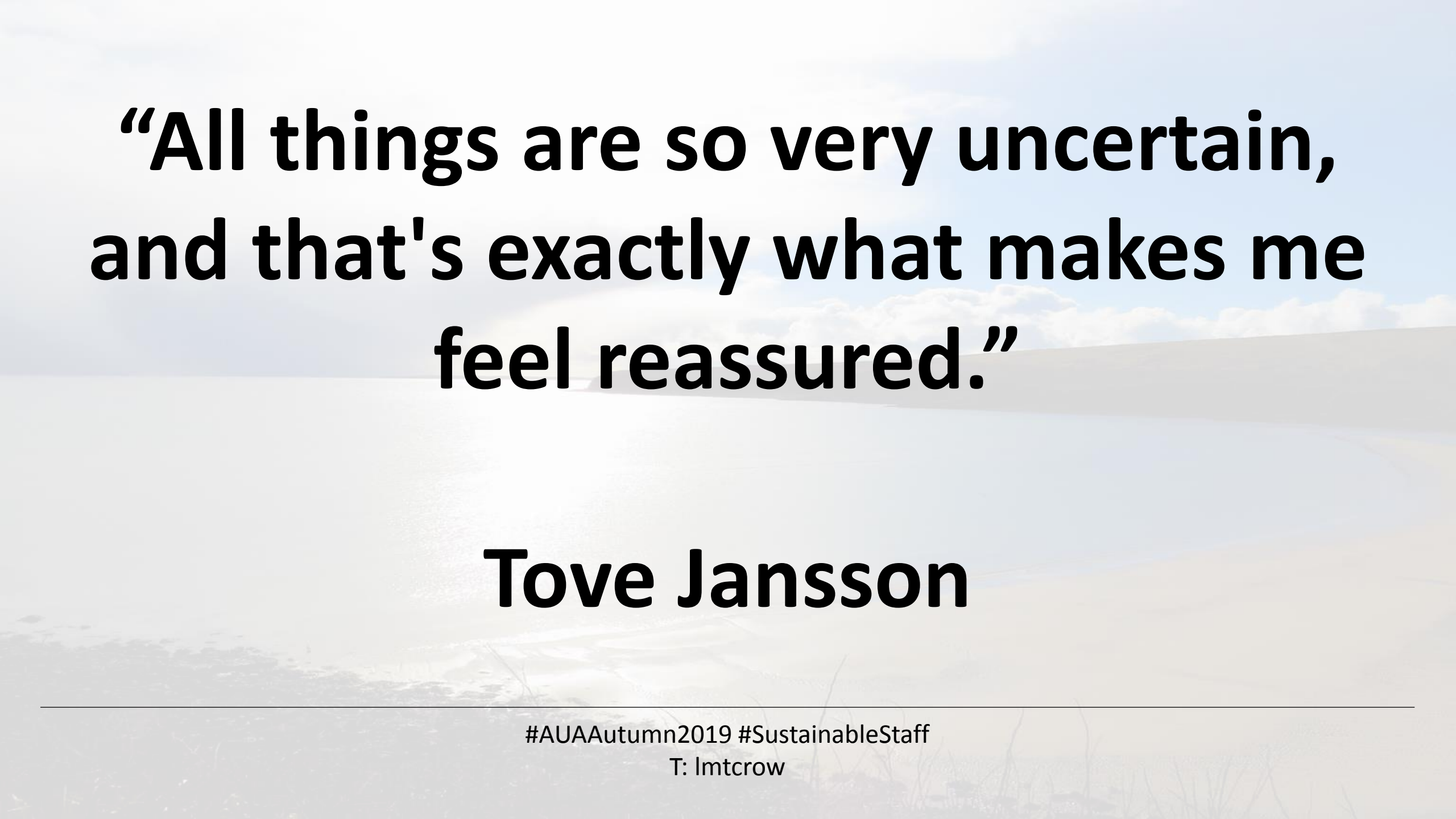
Michael Owen Jones

Jones, M.O., 1991. Why Folklore and Organization(s)? *Western Folklore*, 50(1), pp.29–40.

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**“All things are so very uncertain,  
and that's exactly what makes me  
feel reassured.”**

**Tove Jansson**

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