

Andrew Ventimiglia is a postdoctoral research fellow in the TC Beirne School of Law at The University of Queensland. His work focuses on the socio-cultural production and use of intellectual property law. Specifically, he explores the complex work of translation between unique cultural and historical circumstances and the forms of intellectual property that are produced and mobilized to adjudicate particular conflicts. In doing so, he draws upon the fields of cultural studies, law, and history, as well as the interdisciplinary domains of law and society scholarship, critical legal studies, legal history, and religious studies. Andrew's scholarship on intellectual property law has appeared in *Cultural Critique* and the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* as well as in the SSRC-funded collaborative online project *Frequencies: A Genealogy of Spirituality*. His manuscript *Spirited Possessions: Intellectual Property and the American Spiritual Marketplace* – exploring the complex issues related to ownership in sacred, prophetic, and channeled texts – is currently under review at Cambridge University Press. Before joining The University of Queensland, he earned a PhD in cultural studies from University of California, Davis as well as a Master's in cinema studies and a certificate from the Program in Culture and Media from New York University.

Authorship and Authority in Intellectual Property: Mary Baker Eddy and the Legal Life of Religious Texts

This paper investigates intellectual property law as a mechanism for maintaining religious authority by focusing on the legal strategies of Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy in the years leading up to the passage of the landmark *1909 Copyright Act*. Eddy's nuanced approach to copyright allowed her to achieve key organizational objectives within the Christian Science Church (minimizing threats to her authority, limiting divergent interpretations of her work) while also helping her articulate an investment in both the ethics and economics of ownership in the religious domain. From her first publication of *Science and Health* in 1875 to her final revisions thirty-five years later, Mary Baker Eddy demonstrated a savvy understanding of the power of intellectual property law to protect both the economic and spiritual value of her writings, all while bolstering her own personal authority over a rapidly growing new American religion. Eddy's turn-of-the-century interest in copyright dovetailed with concurrent efforts to reform copyright by extending the duration of those rights and eliminating many of the details of registration. This activism – which brought her into unexpected consonance with erstwhile enemies like Mark Twain – ultimately contributed to the passage of the *1909 Copyright Act*. Eddy's legal legacy continued through the twentieth century as the Christian Science Board of Directors passed a private bill in 1972 granting extended protection to *Science and Health*, a law considered necessary to secure the book's role as pastor of the church and yet later deemed unconstitutional for its granting of indefinite ownership rights in the text. Through careful historical analysis of heretofore unavailable legal materials and letters from the Mary Baker

Eddy Library, this chapter reveals the many allied interests advocating for the legal reform of intellectual property to favor author and owners.

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EMPLOYMENT

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, TC Beirne School of Law, The University of Queensland
2016 - Current

Three-year position funded through the Australian Research Council Laureate Fellowship working on interdisciplinary project ‘Harnessing Intellectual Property for Food Security.’

EDUCATION

Ph.D. **University of California, Davis**, Cultural Studies, December 2015

“Spirited Possessions: Media and Intellectual Property in the American Spiritual Marketplace”

Mario Biagioli (chair), Ari Y. Kelman, Mark Elmore, Kriss Ravetto

MA **New York University**, Cinema Studies and Certificate in Program in Culture and Media, May 2006

Thesis Documentary Film: *Dream Theater*

BFA **New York University**, Cinema Studies, May 2003

PUBLICATIONS

“A Market in Prophecy: Secularism, Law, and the Economy of American Religious Publishing.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religions* (Forthcoming), (9,302 words).

“Demanding the Angels’ Share: Intellectual Property, Emerging Religions, and the Spirit of the Work.” *Cultural Critique* (Forthcoming), (13,692 words).

“[The Interface is the Message](#),” Review of Lori Emerson, *Reading Writing Interfaces: From the Digital to the Bookbound*, *Reviews in Cultural Theory* (June 15, 2016), (2,091 words).

["A Course in Miracles,"](#) *Frequencies: A Collaborative Genealogy of Spirituality* (December 14, 2011), (1,194 words).

SELECTED AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

Cultural Studies Dissertation Fellowship, UC Davis, Fall 2015
Mary Baker Eddy Library Research Fellowship, Summer 2015
Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, Woodrow Wilson
National Fellowship Foundation, 2013-14
Law and Humanities Junior Scholar, Center for the Study of Law and Culture, Columbia
University, June 2013
Research Fellowship in the Humanities, Davis Humanities Institute, UC Davis, 2008-09

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

The University of Queensland, TC Beirne School of Law, 2016-17

Instructor **Advanced Research** (LAWS 4114), Semester 2 2016 and Summer 2017
Supervised individual research projects in area of intellectual property law with
special attention given to teaching students how to conduct in-depth legal
research and develop research into an article suitable for publication.

UC Davis, Religious Studies and American Studies, 2012-16

Instructor **Images of America and Americans in Popular Culture** (AMS 30), Spring
2016
Technology in American Lives (AMS 5), Winter 2016
Christianity in the Contemporary World (RST 106), Winter 2016
American Popular Culture (AMS 130), Summer 2014
Ritual and Symbol in America (AMS 155), Fall 2012

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

"Spirited Possessions: Intellectual Property
and Media in the American Spiritual
Marketplace." **Law, Public Culture, and
Religion Workshop. American Academy of
Religion Annual Meeting.** November 21-
24, 2015.

"The Profit in Prophecy: Intellectual Property
and the Economics of Evangelical
Publishing." **American Academy of
Religion Annual Meeting.** November 21-24, 2015.

“‘Christian Science is not Copyrighted’: Mary Baker Eddy and Intellectual Property.”

Fellows Talk at the Mary Baker Eddy

Library. July 30, 2015.

“A Market in Prophecy: Heterodoxy, Fair Use and the Spirit of Copyright in the Worldwide

Church of God.” **Law and Society**

Association Annual Meeting. May 28-31, 2015.

“Toward a Spiritual Commons in American Religion: Sermon Databases, Bible Software, Religious File Types.” **American Academy of Religion, Western Region.** Santa Clara University. March 20-22, 2015

“Demanding the Angel’s Share: Intellectual Property and Emerging Spiritual Organizations.” **Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature Conference.** University of Minnesota. September 26-27, 2014.

“Copyright Revelation: Intellectual Property and Spiritual Organization in the Urantia Foundation.” **Conference on Religion and Law in American History.** Florida State University. March 24, 2013.