

THE ORIGINS OF ORIGINALITY: THE TRUE STORY OF *WALTER V LANE*

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17 FEBRUARY 2017 (FRIDAY) 4.30PM to 6.30PM
NUS LAW (BUKIT TIMAH CAMPUS), BLOCK B LEVEL 3, EXECUTIVE SEMINAR ROOM

Commentator:
Professor Graeme Austin, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne Law School &
Victoria University of Wellington

Chairperson:
Associate Professor Elizabeth Ng Siew Kuan
Deputy Chair and Director (IP), Centre for Law & Business, NUS Law



ABSTRACT

Originality is a cornerstone of contemporary copyright law; in order to receive protection, works must be 'original'. Yet, throughout the Commonwealth, lawyers must rely on common law interpretations rather than statutory definitions to delineate the boundaries of originality for copyright purposes. One of the persistent challenges for the courts has been identifying when a copy of a work can itself be an original work.

This question of protecting copies of other works arose before originality was even a statutory requirement. In the classic case of *Walter v Lane* (1900), the House of Lords decided that verbatim reports in *The Times* of speeches given by the politician Lord Rosebery were protected under the existing copyright legislation. *Walter v Lane* is a seminal copyright case still cited in 21st-century judgments. But recent archival research has revealed it was also principled personal conflict, with the Bodley Head publisher John Lane (1854-1925) and Liberal editor Charles Geake (1867-1919) on one side and Charles Frederic Moberly Bell (1847-1911), the Managing Director of *The Times*, on the other. This feud caused embarrassment and upset to Lord Rosebery himself, a friend to both Moberly Bell and Geake, who found himself caught in the middle. This lecture will explore the true story behind *Walter v Lane* and consider what, if any, lessons the case can still teach us about copyright law today.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Dr Barbara Lauriat is a Senior Lecturer in Law at King's College London, teaching and conducting research on intellectual property law subjects. She is also a Research Fellow of the Oxford Intellectual Property Research Centre (OIPRC) in the University of Oxford Law Faculty, an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Notre Dame London Law Centre, and an Associate Academic Fellow of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple. She serves on the editorial board of *Arbitration International* and the *King's Law Journal* and is the academic consultant for *Copinger & Skone James on Copyright*.



PROGRAMME

- 4.30 pm Registration & Tea
- 5.00 pm Welcome
- 5.05 pm Seminar by Dr Barbara Lauriat
- 6.05 pm Discussion
- 6.30 pm End of Session

REGISTRATION

There is no registration fee for this seminar but seats are limited. To register please [click here](#) or scan the QR Code.

For enquiries, please contact Atikah at clb@nus.edu.sg

Registration Deadline: **14 February 2016 (Tuesday)**



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Practice Area: Intellectual Property
Training Level: General

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