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The Legal Imagination

45th Anniversary Edition

by James Boyd White

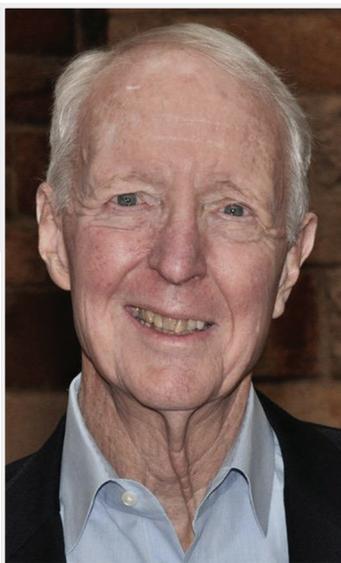
Revered for pioneering the law and literature movement, *The Legal Imagination* celebrates its 45th year of inspiring students and readers around the world. In this special Anniversary Edition, introduced with a new Foreword by author James Boyd White, the original, unabridged text has been carefully reproduced to challenge a new generation of readers to understand the language of the law through the prism of literature.

The topics covered in *The Legal Imagination* are as eclectic as its readership, juxtaposing examples of legal writing alongside poetry, philosophy, and literary criticism. White frames thought-provoking discussions on topics that intersect both legal and non-legal discourse, like reading the utopian *Constitution of Brook Farm* alongside Shakespeare's *Tempest*, or a judge's sentencing decision alongside Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, or a set of judicial opinions alongside lyric poems.

White asks his readers not only to analyze legal and non-legal literature, but to consider the power of language, and how it can be reimagined. Excerpted authors include Plato, James Joyce, Albert Camus, Leo Tolstoy, and Emily Dickinson.

First published in 1973, *The Legal Imagination* broke convention and urged students to understand the law beyond mere memorization, encouraging readers "to trust and follow their own curiosity" and to come to terms with the nature and potential limits of legal language. It should be read not only by people of the law, but by anyone with an interest in the power of language and in writing as a way of thinking and creating.

The book has a timeless quality. James Boyd White writes in the Foreword, "I think in fact that it may be of wider relevance now than when it was first published, for its central concern is with integrity—integrity of the law, of language, of the individual person—at a time when integrity itself sometimes seems to be threatened as a value."



JAMES BOYD WHITE is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. During his teaching career he was the Hart Wright Professor of Law, Professor of English, and adjunct professor of Classics at the University of Michigan. Among his books on law and the humanities are *Living Speech*, *Justice as Translation*, and *When Words Lose Their Meaning*.

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Praise for THE LEGAL IMAGINATION

The Legal Imagination shows us that law is far from a set of rules. Law is a language. Used well, it is the world-constructing conversation of a community of human minds. Professor White offers a vision lawyers need even more today than at its first publication 45 years ago—a vision of law as conversation in which we listen deeply and dare to recognize truth wherever it may appear—even in the words of those we oppose. *The Legal Imagination* is, quite simply, a work of art.

—**Linda Edwards**,
UNLV, William S. Boyd School of Law

The *Legal Imagination* is a weighty work and the shelf of any lawyer or law student is unbalanced without it. We have waited many years to see it again in print, in full, and the wait will be worthwhile. Within its pages a thoughtful teacher walks with us and talks with us and helps us to imagine ways of reading, writing, listening and speaking that can win arguments without losing humanity.

—**Gary Watt**, School of Law,
University of Warwick

This book changed my students' lives and my own. Through its thoughtfully sequenced, challenging readings and writing assignments, it provides a structure that promotes students' reflection, growth, and feelings of agency. In a curriculum that often crowds out deep thought, *The Legal Imagination* makes space for that at the same time as it models genuine conversation.

—**Mark Weisberg**, Faculty of Law,
Queen's University

