



When Words Lose Their Meaning: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community

James Boyd White

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Through fresh readings of texts ranging from Homer's *Iliad*, Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, and Austen's *Emma* through the United States Constitution and *McCulloch v. Maryland*, James Boyd White examines the relationship between an individual mind and its language and culture as well as the "textual community" established between writer and audience. These striking textual analyses develop a rhetoric—a "way of reading" that can be brought to any text but that, in broader terms, becomes a way of learning that can shape the reader's life.

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"Undeniably a unique and significant work. . . . *When Words Lose Their Meaning* is a rewarding book by a distinguished legal scholar. It is a showcase for the most interesting sort of inter-disciplinary work: the kind that brings together from traditionally separate fields not so much information as ideas and approaches."—R. B. Kershner, Jr., *Georgia Review*

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