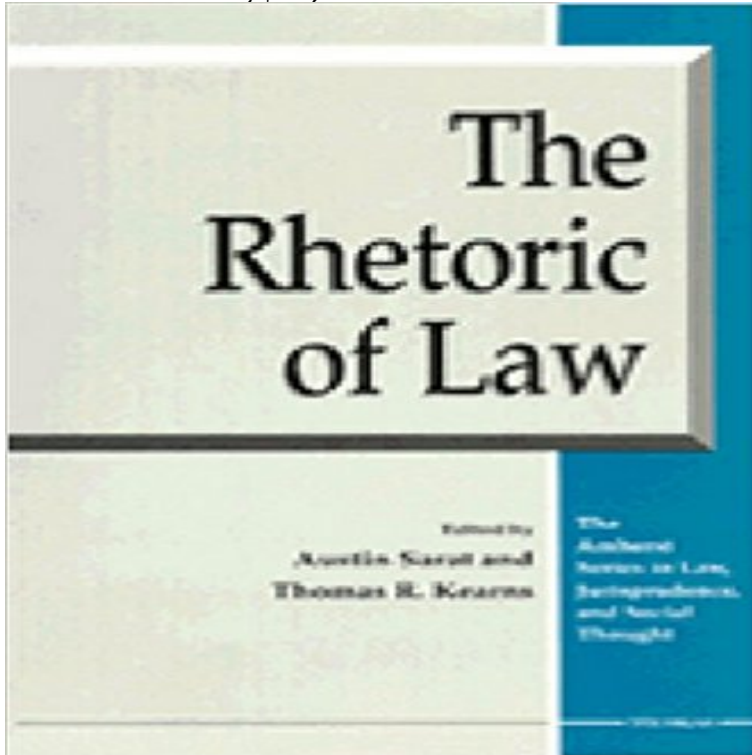


The Rhetoric of Law (The Amherst Series in Law, Jurisprudence, and Social Thought)



Law is a profession of words. Simultaneously celebratory of great prose and dogmatically insistent on precise usage, law is a stage for verbal virtuosity, linguistic mastery, and persuasive argument. Yet the linguistic display is not without substance: the words of law take on a seriousness virtually unparalleled in any other domain of human experience. The Rhetoric of Law examines the words used in legal institutions and proceedings and explores both the literary aspect of legal life and the role of rhetoric in shaping the life of the law. The essays in The Rhetoric of Law reflect the diverse influences of literary theory, feminism, and interpretive social science. Yet all call into question the rigid separation of rhetoric and justice that has been characteristic of the philosophical inquiry as far back as Plato. As a result, they open the way for a new understanding of law--an understanding that takes language to be neither esoteric nor frivolous and that views rhetoric as essential to the pursuit of justice. This volume provides a bracing reminder of the possibilities and problems of law, of its capacity to engage the best of human character, and of its vulnerability to cynical manipulation. Contributors are Lawrence Douglas, Robert A. Ferguson, Peter Goodrich, Barbara Johnson, Thomas R. Kearns, Austin Sarat, Adam Thurschwell, James Boyd White, and Lucie White. Austin Sarat is William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Jurisprudence and Political Science, Amherst College. Thomas R. Kearns is William H. Hastie Professor of Philosophy, Amherst College.

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