



A Most Detestable Crime: New Philosophical Essays on Rape

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Rape is one of the oldest crimes, yet in some ways it is the least understood. Criminal law classifies rape as a *crime against the person* along with murder, robbery, and battery. But in at least one respect rape is unique--with few exceptions its perpetrators are male and its victims are female. The gendered nature of rape raises questions of equality and fairness as well as about the scope of individual rights to autonomy, privacy, security, and bodily integrity. Rape is therefore an important subject for political and social philosophy as well as for ethics, feminist philosophy, and the philosophy of law.

This collection of original essays by leading philosophers investigates the philosophical dimensions of rape in all of its manifestations: act, crime, practice, and institution. The essays examine such issues as the nature of rape; the wrongfulness and harmfulness of rape; the relation of rape to racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression; and the legitimacy of various rape-law doctrines (such as the corroboration requirement, the marital-rape exemption, and the reasonable-belief defense). Each contributor advances a novel argument and seeks to disentangle the conceptual, evaluative, and empirical issues that arise in connection with the crime. Editor Keith Burgess-Jackson provides a substantive introduction, a history of rape law, two extensive bibliographies, and a detailed index to round out this major addition to a much-needed philosophical discussion of rape.

A Most Detestable Crime is among the first philosophical anthologies devoted exclusively to the subject of rape--as complex and interesting intellectually as it is pervasive and disturbing socially. It is an essential reference work not only for legal and feminist philosophers, but for feminist scholars and practitioners in every field, including law, medicine, social work, and counseling. This volume will also be of interest to social, political, and legal theorists of every ideological and methodological persuasion.

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