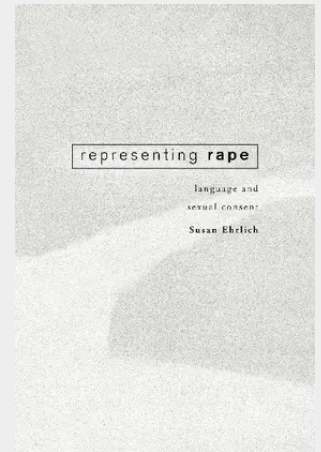


Representing Rape

Language and sexual consent

Representing Rape is the first feminist analysis of the language of sexual assault trials from the perspective of linguists. Susan Ehrlich argues that language is central to all legal settings - specifically sexual harassment and acquaintance rape hearings where linguistic descriptions of the events are often the only type of evidence available. Language does not simply reflect but helps to construct the character of the people and events under investigation. The book is based around a case study of the trial of a male student accused of two instances of sexual assault in two different settings: a university tribunal and a criminal trial. This case is situated within international studies on rape trials and is relevant to the legal systems of the US, Canada, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. She shows how culturally-dominant notions about rape percolate through the talk of sexual assault cases in a variety of settings and ultimately shape their outcome. Ehrlich hopes that to understand rape trials in this way is to recognize their capacity for change. By highlighting the underlying preconceptions and prejudices in the language of courtrooms today, this important book paves the way towards a fairer judicial system for the future.

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