

How to break a rape culture: gendered fear of crime and the myth of the stranger-rapist

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*Abstract:*

*Concern about the gendered nature of fear of crime (and in particular of sex crime), and the spatialisation of fear of crime discourses have preoccupied feminist activists, criminologists and other social scientists for at least the past quarter century. This chapter examines how it is, despite the fact that women have been speaking out against acts of sexual aggression in public space for decades, we continue to live in a context which promotes spatialized violence against women through fear of crime discourses. Interrogating how rape culture is produced by (and it turn produces) rape myths, which produce fear of crime, this chapter deconstructs some of the ways in which rape myths are perpetuated. It advances, following Deleuze and Guattari, how war machines might work to break a rape culture, or at least begin this work. This chapter emphasises why it is imperative that we continue to speak about, and act against, rape culture in contemporary criminological discourses.*

Rape culture and women's fear of crime in public spaces are mutually constituted. In 1991, Elizabeth Wilson described how women live out their lives 'on sufferance' in the metropolis: 'to be a woman – an individual, not part of a family or a kin group – in the city', she argued, 'is to become...a public woman', is to be out of place. Being a public woman, belonging to nobody, the woman in public space is a problem. From this

relationship between gender and belonging in public space, emerges fear of crime. The proliferation of rape culture reminds women that this is the case. Women's fear of crime has been described as the spatial expression of patriarchy (Valentine, 1989), through which women are perpetually warned of their vulnerability (Stanko, 1993: 128). In the context of women's experiences of sexual harassment, we know that 'public order sustains, iterates, and constantly reiterates gender as a fundamental division of society' (Gardner, 1995: 40) and that this 'works as part of a larger strategy of social control though 'sexual terrorism'' (Kissling, 1991: 455).

Concern about the gendered nature of fear of crime (and in particular of sex crime), and the spatialisation of fear of crime discourses have preoccupied feminist activists, criminologists and other social scientists for at least the past quarter century. Calls to engage with women's experiences emerge in these early discussions of women's fear of crime in public spaces; to consider their exclusion from public spaces such as streets, car parks, green spaces, public transport, shopping malls, bars and nightclubs; to take seriously the low-level sexualised harassment that women experience in these spaces; to attend to the significance that intersectionality has on women's experiences of gendered social injustice and the criminal justice system, (Kissling, 1991; Stanko, 1993, 1995, 1996; Gardner, 1990, 1995; Pain, 1991, 2000; Koskela, 1997; Gilchrist et al, 1998). These demands – these rigorous criticisms of existing policy approaches to dealing with fear of crime – highlight the prevalence of an important social problem: spatial injustice and the promotion of rape culture, or, put differently, the promotion of a culture that condones the practice of violence against women. This chapter examines how it is, despite the fact that women have been speaking out against acts of sexual aggression in public space for decades, we<sup>1</sup> continue to live in a context which promotes spatialized violence against

women through fear of crime discourses. I consider the role of spatial justice in this context, and examine why, rather than waning as a result of the work of these early feminist interventions, contemporary rape culture is thriving.

One of the ways in which rape culture is able to thrive is through the production and reproduction of gendered fear of crime. This works through the mobilisation of certain rape myths. In this chapter I consider the composition of rape culture in the context of fear of crime and rape myths (how does a rape myth work? What does it do? How do you make a rape myth?). Focussing on the figure of the stranger-rapist, I examine the role that myth plays in the construction of rape culture and fear of crime. I argue that rape myths are part of the State<sup>2</sup> apparatus of control and regulation, and, drawing from the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, I consider how the molecularity of myths might have transformative affordances. I explore how machinic thought, politics and practice might undo gendered spatial injustice and rape culture more broadly by creating 'war machines'. This advances criminological understandings of fear of crime by complexifying the ways in which we think about gender, public space and safety and fear in contemporary debates (Walklate and Mythen, 2008). But first, in order to illustrate how, despite over 25 years of activism in this field, the observations made by early fear of crime scholars remains as pertinent as ever, I turn to consider one of the ways in which rape culture is able to thrive.

Rape culture can be understood as a socio-cultural ethic or practice which normalizes sexual violence (usually) against women. From a Deleuzo-Guattarian (2004a [1972]), 2004b [1980]) perspective, it is possible to suggest that rape culture is part of the apparatus of the State. Rape culture works in a number of ways to stabilize perceived hierarchies of gender inequality between men and women. It is rape culture that both

produces and is produced by discourses which constitutes fear of crime and constructs the female<sup>3</sup> body as a problem in public space (Wilson, 1991).

Rape culture is also sustained in the popular imaginary through arguments which defend 'page 3'<sup>4</sup> in the UK, for instance, the over-representation of female victims of sex crimes in media news reporting, stand-up comedians' sexist jokes, and so on. It is sustained in the criminal justice imaginary, and in public policy, through the construction of sex crimes as inherently different to other forms of crimes against the person, through discourses which place women as inherently more vulnerable public space-users than men, and through actuarial approaches to criminal justice which place greater responsibility on women (as potential victims) for preventing sexual violence than men (as potential offenders). As has been demonstrated elsewhere (Stanko 1993, Brooks, 2011, Fanghanel, 2013, Olney, 2015), it is rape culture that sustains the pervasiveness of safety advice offered to women which promotes self-policing, for instance, or which sustains victim-blaming discourses and that situate the responsibility to avoid rape and sexual assault in public spaces on women themselves. Let us examine how this works in practice.

### *How does rape culture work?*

In 2014, the Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) in the United States (US) participated in a consultation with the White House's Office on Violence Against Women's Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. In it, RAINN suggest that the 'unfortunate trend towards blaming 'rape culture' for...sexual violence' distracts current anti-rape activist campaigns by obscuring the fact that it is 'a minority of individuals', not cultures, who rape. In their letter, RAINN – an organisation which works to prevent

sexual violence – posit that rapists, rather like ‘bad apples’, are *individuals who choose to rape*, rather than a product of culture more broadly:

More than 90% of college-age males do not, and are unlikely to ever rape. In fact, we have found that they’re ready and eager to be engaged on these issues. *It’s the other guys* (and, sometimes, women) who are the problem. (RAINN, 2014, no page no., emphasis added).

So, can there really be no such thing as rape culture? The notion and category of ‘culture’ is deeply contested (Gilroy, 1993). A laden term, ‘culture’ originates from the Latin ‘cultura’ meaning to tend or cultivate agriculture. Culture can be understood as something that is produced, nurtured, raised, as something which can be consumed, and which can prosper and wither. When we say that something is ‘cultural’ we mean that it has specific resonance within a specific spatio-temporal context and that it may not have the same meaning outside of that context. Invoking ‘culture’ to account for violence for ‘bad behaviour’ such as rape, is a double-edged sword.

The debates surrounding Susan Moller Okin’s (1999) controversial essay on feminism and multiculturalism demonstrate this (see Honig 1999). Leti Volpp (2000), in an approach that I argue proves fruitful for understanding the current case, contrasts two instances of child marriage – another form of gender violence – in the US (one between US nationals in Maryland and another between two Mexican nationals living illegally in Texas). Discourses surrounding the former marriage condemned the union of a twenty-nine year old man to his thirteen year old bride as a case of individual ‘perversion’ and ‘lack of responsibility’. Discourses surrounding the latter marriage between a fourteen year old female and a twenty-two year old male, attributed it to the ‘Mexican culture’

which normalises the precocious sexuality of young Mexican women (Volpp, 2000: 92-97). Both accounts, argues Volpp, enable broader US society to ignore its own taken-for-granted culture. On the one hand, by demonising one marriage as an individual pathology, public discourses are able to absolve themselves of the possibility that there is something inherent about US culture which enables child marriage to occur, whilst on the other hand, demonising the latter marriage as the product of an 'other' culture, the broader US public is absolved of any anxiety about its *own* culture.

Suggesting that culture causes sexual violence is certainly a far from straightforward proposition. It is this complexity that I recognise RAINN might be trying to capture in their White House recommendations. Yet, RAINN's comments mark one of series of developments in contemporary attitudes to rape and sexual assault prevention which shift attention away from the social and systemic factors which promote a culture that permits and enables sexual violence, towards one which reduces the culpability and the responsibility for preventing such attacks to the individual. I am interested in what happens when this occurs. Let us begin by examining the implications of RAINN's claims about rape culture. To return to their original argument:

Rape is not caused by cultural factors but by the conscious decisions, of a small percentage of the community, to commit a violent crime.

While that may seem an obvious point, it has tended to get lost in recent debates. This has led to an inclination to focus on particular segments of the student population (e.g. athletes), particular aspects of campus culture (e.g. the Greek system<sup>5</sup>), or traits that are common in many millions of law-abiding Americans

(e.g. masculinity) rather than on the sub-population at fault; those who commit rape (RAINN, 2014, no page no.).

This, they argue, absolves the individual perpetrator of blame, by allowing him/her to make a 'my culture made me do it' argument (Honig, 1999). By suggesting that it is not culture, but rather individual perversion which makes people commit sexual violence, RAINN argue that we get closer the possibility of reducing and preventing sexual assaults.

Their argument has at least three implications. Firstly, RAINN appear to be eliding the term 'rape culture' with the concept of 'cultures who rape'. Stereotypes about athletes or fraternities reify a construction of masculinity which is 'macho', elitist, aggressive, hierarchical, highly physicalized and aligned with sexual violence. Clearly, to suggest that fraternities have a culture of sexual violence or that all athletes are (potential if not actual) rapists is as simplistic as it is offensive (Humphrey and Khan, 2000, see also Messerschmidt, 1993). It is also not what is meant by 'rape culture'. These groups, whom RAINN identify as the target of sexual violence prevention education programmes, might be insulted and unmoved by such attention. Fraternities and sports teams may have 'cultures' of their own but these are not inherent to, nor outside of, 'rape culture' more broadly. Indeed, the very notion that these groups might stereotypically be thought of as rapists in the first place relies on reference to discourses of masculinity that are imbued with, and constituted through, a broader culture in which sexual violence is permissible.

Secondly, we can analyse the implications of this project of individualising blame by comparing this extract to Volpp's (2000) discussion of child marriage. By pathologising men (and women) who commit sexual assault as errant malevolents we erase the specificity of the cultural context in which their sexual violence is enabled in the first

place. Not all acts of sexual violence are acts of rape. Sexual violence encompasses less obvious forms of aggression such as 'slut-shaming', sexual harassment, cat-calling, flashing, acts of physical molestation, latent threats, stalking, coercive sex, to name only a few. These acts of 'everyday' aggressions constitute and are constituted by a culture in which sexual violence is able to happen (see Kissing, 1991; Gardner, 1995; Stanko, 1993, 1995). Thirdly, divorcing the individual aggressor from the culture in which she or he aggresses is an exercise in the erasure of very conditions in which sexuality and proper subjects are produced and policed through State apparatus. As Volpp's (2000) argument suggests, if we are blind to the tyranny of our own culture, we are blind the possibilities of challenging this tyranny.

Ultimately, individualising blame obliterates the socio-cultural constructions that make sexual violence possible in the first place. Consider this in the context of hate crime; Barbara Perry (2001) argues that these occur not simply because perpetrators of hate crimes enjoy committing those offences, nor because they feel envious of the object of their hate, nor because they feel disenfranchised from their community (usually the opposite, in fact), but because hate crimes enable a certain performance of the self, within the context of a culture which the perpetrator believes is at least indifferent to their crime, if not actually in support of it. For Perry, hate crimes occur because the socio-cultural context in which they happen actively facilitates them through structural injustices such as institutional racism, misogyny, disablism or homophobia which are enshrined at all levels of the State and within the fabric of social life. Arguably, rape culture is part of this. It fosters the construction and deployment of the 'proper objects' of hate and derision, of proper victims, of proper perpetrators and of the proper spatio-temporal context for this to emerge (the street corner, the empty car park, the unlit



under-pass). Contemporary criminological thinking about gendered fear of crime and public space needs to attend to this relationship between normative approaches to fear of crime, sexual violence and the context in which it is able to occur. Neglecting the interplay between these elements in the way that RAINN suggests is one of the ways in which rape culture is able to thrive.

To argue that sexual violence occurs because of rape culture does not provide an apology for perpetrators of sexual violence. Likewise, suggesting that there are specific cultures that produce those more likely to rape than others is a corruption of what the term 'rape culture' is. Certainly, male and female perpetrators of sexual violence cannot claim 'my culture made me do it', but equally, the battle against sexual violence and its relationship with fear of crime cannot obfuscate the context in which perpetrators might believe that they might get away with it/ that it was probably ok/that 'no' does not always mean 'no' (O'Byrne et al, 2008). Instead, claims which erase the existence rape culture enable sexual violence to breed unchecked as they do not permit interrogation of the territory upon which sexual violence might emerge as a possibility for a perpetrator in the first place.

*How do you make a rape culture?*

Part of the way in which fear of crime and rape culture works is through the expression of rape myths. Myths, from the Greek *muthos* meaning a story delivered by word of mouth, are, according to Lévi-Strauss (1955), common to all societies and underlie all cultural activities. Myths are defined both as allegories to explain social phenomena *and* widely held, but false, beliefs. These definitions are instructive in the context of rape culture.

The importance of story-telling and myth-making about public space is well-recognised in fear of crime studies (Lupton, 1999). The role of false belief too, saturates rape myths and rape culture. Myths concern events which happened 'long ago' or in an 'everlasting present' (Lévi-Strauss, 1955: 430), the atemporality of which makes them excessive to the event in which they emerge. In the context of rape myths, for instance, the sluttily dressed woman-as-likely-prey, the high-heeled girl-as-ideal-victim, the unescorted woman-as-provocative, are ubiquitous images that become synecdoches for sexual assault and rape within rape culture (Brownmiller, 1975, Stanko, 1995, Gardner, 1995, Friedman and Valenti, 2008). Myths also, importantly, work to create knowledges about places that are fearsome and places that are safe. Lupton's (1999) research has demonstrated that myths about places which are apparently fearsome are often based on constructions of marginalised social 'Others', cast as deviants to be avoided. As I have argued elsewhere (Fanghanel, 2014), the work that this sort of Othering does in order to diminish fear of crime ends up promoting the very fear of crime that it purportedly tries to combat.

For Deleuze and Guattari (2004a [1972], 2004b [1980]) myths are ideological, and only become productive (only do something) when they are brought into connection with what they call 'real social production'. That is, myth are representational (in a state of Being), but in themselves, are not productive outside of social relations. The myth of the stranger-rapist, for instance, works to produce fear of crime in a social context in which public spaces are constructed as sites of exclusion for certain bodies, in favour of others, where women do not belong, where potential sexual violence is latent and ubiquitous. Yet, myths such as these pose problems for Deleuze and Guattari who posit that 'there is no life for us in the myth. Only myth lives in the myth' (2004a [1972]: 388). A myth, in

this form, is molar. Molarity describes a static state of 'making-the-same'. A mole, for Deleuze and Guattari is a unified whole – a myth, alone, can only be a myth – and is in an ossified state of Being, not of Becoming-<sup>6</sup>. The act and practice of Becoming- is foundational to Deleuze and Guattari's politics. It is in the flow, the indeterminacy, the immanence, the potentiality of Becoming- that something is possible. Becoming- is a process of change, it is the way in which systems of thought, practices, State politics, selves, might deterritorialise (and reterritorialize) and transform contemporary life. In the present case, I suggest it is precisely in the potentiality of the Becoming-, of the molecular (as opposed to the molar), that contemporary rape culture and fear of crime might be transformed.

This molecularity can be understood by reading Lévi-Strauss's structuralist account of how myths work in conjunction with Deleuze's (2004) critique of his work, through the concept of machinic assemblages. Whereas for Lévi-Strauss, myths acquire meaning through their structure, for Deleuze and Guattari, the particular connection a myth has with other bodies within a machine is only one of innumerable ways in which a myth might become meaningful, or indeed, might become a myth in the first place. *Contra* Lévi-Strauss's assertions about the structure and the workings of the myth, Deleuze and Guattari (2004b [1980]: 262) argue that myths viewed through a structuralist lens are an anathema to the potentiality of Becoming-; *myths are the true State order*. Becoming- (Becoming-animal, Becoming-minortarian, Becoming-woman) deviates from this true order. Even Lévi-Strauss's analysis of myths of becoming animal, for instance, are according to Deleuze and Guattari, merely describing blocks of Becoming-. They are not Becoming-animals whose potentiality might be transformative, who deterritorialise State

apparatus and power. The blocks are too fragmented to offer lines of flight; the structure too serial to imply different forms of Becoming-.

The potential to transform social life – rape culture – lies in the potentiality of Becoming-. A myth is molar: crystallised, ossified, it has become a tool of the State apparatus. What is needed is a focus on the molecular: those component parts or bodies which compose the moles, which compose the myths, which work in conjunction with other bodies which produce rape culture, within a machinic assemblage.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a 'machine', a word which has its etymological origins in Greek, Latin and Proto-Indo European languages stems from 'maghana', which means 'that which enables/ to have power'. As Buchanan (1997: 83) suggests, machines 'are always purposeful'; they 'must be able to do something'. Understood thusly, for Deleuze & Guattari, machines are potent and dynamic answers to particular problems: the problem of the female body in public space, for instance. The bodies which compose the machine have no *a priori* function, meaning, intrinsic value or ethic in themselves, but acquire meaning, or function, through relation, flow – assemblage – with other desiring, producing machines.

Within the myth of the stranger-rapist, the assemblage of the female body, the unaccompanied body, the young body, notions of modesty, cultural values of sexual desire, the night time, the street, the menacing body, the dark figure of the Other and so on, connect to constitute the myth that women are at risk from unknown strangers in public space. For Deleuze and Guattari (2004a [1972], 2004b [1980]) it will be by examining how a myth works that the ordering and organising capacities will become apparent (within which machinic context? Producing which affects?). How 'meaning'

works, therefore, alters according to how these flows are organised within historically and geographically-specific machines, and the affects they produce.

### *Who is the stranger-rapist?*

Let us return to consider the importance of the 'other guy' within the stranger-rapist myth, evoked by RAINN. Research has variously demonstrated how the myth that women risk being raped by strangers on street corners saturates contemporary attitudes to preventing fear of crime and promoting safety in public spaces (Pain 1991, Stanko 1996, Lupton, 1999; Brooks, 2008). I have variously described how rapists are, in popular discourses, referred to as 'fucking nutters', 'arseholes', 'lunatics', 'weirdos' how they are contrasted with 'known' men who 'have the brains' not to rape women in public spaces (Fanghanel, 2013, 2015; Fanghanel and Lim, 2016; Lim and Fanghanel, 2016). What does it mean to say that rapist are 'arseholes' or simply to say that they are 'other guys'? And what are we able to do with this notion of 'unpredictable stranger' danger (Lupton, 1999; Pain, 2000)? What composes this mythic creature?

The myth of the stranger-rapist who lies in wait to ambush unsuspecting women in dark alleys or from behind a bush is an important component of rape myths more broadly. Even though we know that women are more likely to be sexually assault by a known offender (Stanko, 1993), perhaps with whom they live, perhaps to whom they are related, than by the mythic figure of the stranger-rapist, his image is, nonetheless, pervasive in the way that women are encouraged to deal with the risks discursively posed by their bodies in public spaces and to account for their fear of crime. The body of the stranger-rapist myth exists in conjunction with the myth of the ideal victim, with the construction

of darkness and strangeness as fearsome, with the public space of the street as a site of fear.

The stranger-rapist, we know, as RAINN tells us, is errant *individual*. Unrepresentative of his group, the stranger-rapist is on the periphery, he is not like us, he is 'Other'. If we consider the boundary between self and other in the context of fear of crime, the tensions between fear, safety and how public spaces are ordered emerges. Boundary erection is usually (though not exclusively) an exercise of dominant power over a marginalised other (Sibley, 1995; see Low, 2008; Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002). In the context of the stranger-rapist, casting this figure to the margin whilst simultaneously holding that he might be everywhere is what makes this myth so persuasive.

This myth supposes that the figure of the stranger-rapist is everywhere and yet he belongs to no-one: he is not my brother, my neighbour, my friend or my ex. He is one of those 'other guys'; that arsehole 'out there'. He is, figuratively, actually, *strange*. He is endlessly Other to our Selves (Lupton, 1999 Ahmed, 2006). His strangeness, (from the Latin *extraneus* meaning 'external' or 'from without'), figuratively casts him beyond the pale<sup>7</sup>. The stranger-rapist becomes uncommon in this myth, even as fear of him saturates all elements of public space. As an abhorrent figure – as an 'arsehole', or a 'weirdo' or a 'fucking nutter' – we also know three things; that he cannot be reasoned with (because he is a weird nutter); he lacks full subjectivity (because he is composed only of an arsehole); and is always, already outside the boundary of what can be accepted. We also know that this stranger-rapist is not known to us, and so, paradoxically, might be anyone. He is both everyman and no man; a singularity and a multitude. However, though his state of exception composes, in part, the body of the stranger-rapist myth, he is by no means extraordinary. He may be constructed as 'Other' within the myth, but he is very much at

the centre of the phenomenon of rape myth (see Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b [1980]: 271); he is part of the State apparatus which composes rape culture. Of course, when we speak of multitude, we are speaking of a something that is pure potentiality, but it is also organized. Its particular organization affects what it can do, what it Becomes-. What does it Become- in the context of this rape myth of the stranger-rape myth? We can suggest that it Becomes- an organization of public space, of sanction, of heteronormativity. We can suggest that the multitude of the stranger-rapist is thusly organized so as to be a figurative, intangible individual-as-multitude, which is what makes him so difficult to know, to touch, to affect, to undo.

Despite their critique of myths as molar and non-Becoming- Deleuze and Guattari do conceive of one way in which a myth might contest the State: when myths are Anomalous. Writing of mythic creatures in literature, Deleuze and Guattari (2004b [1980]: 268) bring their emphasis on the potentialities of Becoming- into a dialogue with the concept of the multitude to suggest that within multitude there is always an Anomal, an outstanding individual (Melville's Moby Dick, Kafka's Josephine) who is always exceptional to the pack or band in which s/he runs. Though the Anomal is exceptional, it is not a model, or pure specimen of the multiplicity from which it comes. Instead Anomals represent the borderline of the pack, or of the multitude (2004b [1980]: 270-1). The Anomal can occupy a number of positions within the multiplicity – it might occupy the centre of power, it might be peripheral, it might reflect the shifting boundaries of the band or multitudinous pack. The Anomal figure is the conduit through which the transformative capacity of Becoming- emerges. According to Negri (2002), the multitude is revolution. It is the fullness of life. It is the revolutionary monster that might transform common living

substance into new forms of life, or ways of Becoming-. New forms of life which, composed of singularities, might produce new subjectivities.

Certainly, in their conceptualisation of the multitude, of its potentiality and its relationship to power, Deleuze and Guattari will have imagined this revolutionary potential. Yet, it would be misleading to simply state that the multitude in relation to Anomal myths and transforming rape culture is 'good'. Nothing is inherently good or bad, nothing about Deleuze and Guattari's work is necessarily emancipatory or liberatory. They suggest themselves that even the exceptional, mythic, Anomal can be 'undermined by forces which establish in them...interior centres of the State type...replacing pack affects with State intelligibilities' Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b [1980]: 271). Though exceptional in the multitude, the Anomal figure is not outside the reach of State apparatus and is able to manifest State affects, such as the Anomal stranger-rapist, here. Within it, is harboured the capacity, or potentiality, for transformation, however. The Anomal of a multiplicity – of a rape myth – can leave the centre of the pack of State apparatus. Because it is composed molecularly, because of its flows and potentialities, it can – it might – connect elsewhere, making different assemblages, and forging new Becomings- and subjectivities (becoming-minortarian, for instance, expressing groups which are 'oppressed, prohibited in revolt') (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b [1980]: 272). We can see that in the multitude of the stranger-rapist myth there is the power to exclude, to marginalise and to persecute forms of life that do not fit; to nurture a rape culture. If the stranger-rapist is Anomal in his particularity even as he is excessive – everywhere in his multitude – he certainly operates within the State apparatus which constructs public spaces as fearsome for women (Wilson, 1991 *inter alia*), and which enables (and is



enabled by) a thriving rape culture which normalises violence against women and women's fear of it.

*How do we break a rape culture?*

It is precisely through the violence of State apparatus that rape myths which compose rape culture are so convincing. The State triumphs, according to Deleuze and Guattari (2004b [1980]: 495), by disavowing its own violence. If the violence of the State apparatus is supposed to presuppose itself (if we are told that violence is 'primal' or 'primitive' or 'natural', if we are told the state only uses violence against violence to keep the peace) the violence of the State itself is obliterated. This is what we obliterate when we try to deny the existence of rape culture.

So how might the multitude of the stranger-rape myth be transformed into 'new forms of life' (Negri, 2002)? What do we need to do to transform rape culture? Deleuze and Guattari's answer would be that we need to make a war machine. A war machine has little to do with actual war, but it is an enemy of the State apparatus (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b [1980]:27). A war machine is explosive. Usually beyond the apparatus of the State, the war machine can (and has sometimes been) captured by State to express itself as the police, the military or other forms of State violence (because as we have seen, nothing is inherently transgressive or transformative), but as a series of flows and dynamisms it is able to resist capture through deterritorialisations – undoings, remakings, virtualising – of the machine of State apparatus (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b [1980]: 483). For Deleuze and Guattari, the war machine offers an alterity to the disciplined, molar strategy of the State apparatus of control. They conceive of the warrior as an anarchic counter to the

disciplined subject. The warrior troubles State apparatus which renders docile and 'zombie-like' its subjects (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b [1980]: 470).

In the context of the State apparatus of rape culture, composed in part through rape myth, the warrior smashes the molar prescription of the stranger-rapist. Through deterritorialisation, it harbours the capacity to undo the power that this State apparatus holds over subjectivity, over public space, over spatial justice. The molecular of the rape myth can be transformed through connection with the metamorphic potentialities of the war machine. Through it we might take the Anomal of the stranger-rapist, singular in his multitude and render him fully anomalous.

The destructive capacities of the war machine challenge the effects of State thinking. Through this conceptualisation, the transformation of what we currently talk about as rape culture and as rape myth Becomes-potential. This way of thinking- of thinking machinically – usefully reminds us that because the machine is eventful, it is not an essence, its meaning is not pre-determined. Rather, for Deleuze and Guattari (2004b [1980]), the machine (here, of rape culture), and the bodies that compose it (rape myths, safety advice, public spaces, sexual mores, appropriate femininity etcetera) – bodies which are themselves composed of machines – harbours the capacity to change what it does, or the way in which it addresses a problem, or the problem which it addresses. Crucially, the relations within a machine are never fixed, they are always in a state of Becoming-. Understanding rape culture as machinic, we can see how women's bodies are policed, produced and reproduced in public space. We can also imagine ethico-political alternatives to the anxiety and 'truth' of what this rape culture means and how it works.

Certainly, the transformation of rape culture is no humble aim. If contemporary fear of crime studies wants to take seriously the effects of social injustice, spatial exclusion, and gender violence, we need ways in which to counter dominant thinking about women in public spaces. Recognising that rape culture exists – the context in which sexual violence against women is normalised – begins this work. Unlike what RAINN suggest, we cannot agree that the stranger-rapist is some ‘other guy’, or some ‘weirdo’ out there. We cannot accept that the myth of the stranger-rapist continues to construct public space and connect with other machines which produce fear of crime. We cannot accept this because we need to challenge the taken-for-grantedness of rape culture that enables it to thrive as part of State apparatus. Recognising the molecularity of myths as a counter to seeing the molarity of them as State apparatus is also part of this work. It is no mean feat to transform a culture which condones violence against women, but it is the feat that feminists, criminologists and social scientist have been calling for, for decades. Kirsten Jozkowski (2015: 21) writing about transforming rape culture on US university campuses reminds us that culture can be changed. Indeed, she points out, this has worked when it comes to changing cultural attitudes to smoking and to drunk driving, for instance. The transformation of culture is therefore not impossible. Of course, crystallising education programmes or government policies as the tools through which rape culture might be countered opens up other apparatus of capture by the State (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b [1980]: 386)<sup>8</sup>. They, for instance, open up different ways in which to prefer certain bodies and exclude others, or to accept some forms of gender violence in certain circumstances.

Yet, the war machine can transform the way we think about gender, public space, fear of crime, control... It is not simply about smashing the rape myths which compose rape culture into oblivion (although it might be), it is about interrogating them at a molecular

level: interrogating how knowledge about sexual violence, fear of crime and public spaces is made, how rape culture practices are produced, and undoing the mystery about the stranger-rapist and his ubiquity, by recognising that in part, this mystery is an inherent part of the State apparatus.

*Post script*

I write this chapter at a time of potential political upheaval in the UK; debates from the political left and political right unfold, fold, entwine, metamorph into each other around the question of whether or not the UK should vote to leave the European Union (EU). In a recent press interview, Nigel Farage, the leader of the right-wing United Kingdom Independence Party and Member of the European Parliament lobbying for the UK to leave the EU recently warned voters that, following reported sex attacks on women in Cologne, Germany in early 2016, allegedly perpetrated by asylum-seekers, 'women may be at a particular risk from the 'cultural' differences between British society and migrants' (Ross, 2016) if the UK remains in the EU. Farage elides the body of the asylum-seeker (black, poor, Other) with that of the European migrant to promote fear of crime – fear of sexual violence here. Recall my earlier comments about 'culture': Farage's comments suppose that British society is not a culture that rapes and that those Other, different, migrants are cultures that rape, which not only occludes British rape culture, but also relies on the truth of its existence, and on the position of the woman's body as inherently vulnerable to stranger-rapists to make this political point. Farage's concern is not with women who are 'at risk', instead it is with using the body of the woman, which stands in for a threat to nationhood, and to security of the border, to work together as part of a State apparatus of control. These conjunctions demonstrate how rape culture is nurtured, and how it is mobilised to serve political imperatives of the State, even those which, on the face of it,

have little to do with sexuality or gender equality. Comments like this remind us of the importance of transformation, of revolution, and of the need for war machines.

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<sup>1</sup> I recognize that my 'we' may not be your 'we'. The evidence presented in this chapter, and the socio-cultural context about which I am speaking, is situated in post-industrialist economies, usually situated in the global north. This is in part because this is where my empirical examples are drawn from and in part because this socio-economic context is often erroneously assumed to be more egalitarian in terms of gender relations than lower or middle income countries (but see for interesting discussions of this Khan et al., 2011).

<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, reference to the State follows Deleuze and Guattari (2004b [1980]), and is not the same as reference to a nation or a government, though these might also be part of State apparatus (see post-script). In this context, the State can be described as a normalizing force. It represents hierarchical power, it can also appropriate and recapture (reterritorialise) revolutionary thought, war machines, the capacity to transform, and so on. It is, according to Deleuze and Guattari (2004b [1980]:480), the force through which capitalism 'triumphs' in the 'West'. It harnesses potentiality and energy and through this, creates inequalities.

<sup>3</sup> Though my discussion in this chapter is about women, as these are the group that is targeted by the empirical evidence I draw on here, it is clear that non-normative performances of masculinity and trans\* subjectivity are also out-of-place in many public spaces (though there exists little fear of crime research on this latter group yet) (but see for instance Otis, 2007, Moore and Breeze, 2012, Yavorsky and Sayer, 2013 Ableson, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> 'Page 3' is the name given to a specific cultural artefact in United Kingdom (UK) society. It describes the page of a popular daily tabloid newspaper which publishes a full page image of a young woman wearing only the lower part of her underwear, leaving her breasts exposed.

<sup>5</sup> The Greek system describes sorority or fraternity groups on US university campuses

<sup>6</sup> Becoming- appears in this form to remind of the fluid, contingent, imminent qualities of Becoming-; it is unfinished, it is in flux – running into the next idea, or body, or concept – the hyphen marks the incompleteness of Becoming- and the energy with which Becomings- flow.

<sup>7</sup> A 'pale' is a post or stake used to create a boundary around a specific territory or site. That which is within the boundary marks what is safe, enclosed and secure. When something is beyond the pale, it is not only 'other' or alien but also indecent, abject or disgusting. There is an affective revulsion around being beyond the pale. The pale also denotes a defensible state or area. Between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, 'pale' described parts of Ireland under English rule. Being beyond this pale was being beyond the limits of English law and decency (OED, 2013). The stranger-rapist, the Other, the arsehole is equally abject and indecent.

<sup>8</sup> Compare O'Byrne et al.'s (2008) and Beres's (2010) discussion of sexual miscommunication theory with the 'yes means yes' campaign described and critiqued by Jozkowski (2015) for an example of an attempt to transform rape culture which has been co-opted and transformed to further victimise women who experience sexual violence by hetero-patriarchal State apparatus ('if a girl doesn't say no...', O'Byrne et al., 2008).