

CHAPTER 4 THE METHOD

The early work of Jock Young illustrates some of the issues raised by examining joyriding, as he says:

It is necessary, in order to explain the phenomena of drugtaking, to relate it to factors existing in the wider society [...]The *meaning* of drugtaking has to be sought in the context of the group's values and world view.[...]Drugtaking is almost ubiquitous in our society - the totally temperate individual is statistically the deviant. (1997:71)

However, the absences in the work reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 and the desire to advance a gender and environmentally aware criminology would require the quote to be rewritten - in respect of joyriding - as follows: it is necessary, in order to explain the phenomena of joyriding, to relate it to factors existing in the wider society. The meaning of joyriding has to be sought in the context of the groups values and world view. Driving is almost ubiquitous in our society - the non-driver is statistically the deviant.

The factors in society of which the quotes speak are many. This thesis concentrates on gender and car culture in explaining the phenomena of joyriding. Whereas Young sought to find the differing meanings of drugtaking for his Notting Hill respondents/observees - as distinct from 'merchant seamen, Puerto Ricans and doctors' (1997:71) - this thesis connects - but notes differences between - young men who take cars for dangerously pleasurable drives with men who drive their own cars ostensibly for business or convenience.

Given the near ubiquity of driving the 'group' is taken to be larger and less specific than Young has in mind though as we shall see small identifiable groups were observed as part of the method. Whereas Young was writing of what could be called a subculture of drugtaking the argument that joyriders are subculture of the wider car culture is not presented here. Nothing in the literature or fieldwork suggests any sub-cultural affiliation between joyriders. It may briefly have been a fashion but the relationship may be better described not as hierarchic one of culture/subculture but as a flatter one whereby joyriders and motor-racing enthusiasts, vintage car owners, customisers, 'Sunday Drivers' and, even, 'careful lady drivers can be seen as tribes or clans of the Great Car Economy. Hence the slippage from joyriding to 'driving' in the reworked quote.

Given his subject, circumstances and the temper of the times Young chose participant observation as his method. This can be seen as part of the revolt against quantitative methods. Earlier, and many current, attempts to explore drugtaking in the correctionalist and positivist tradition have sought their explanations in quantifiable factors in the individual, group, area or society. Similar methods for studying joyriding were examined critically in Chapter 3. Some of which is discussed below with additional material setting out some arguments within qualitative methods. Given the significance placed on masculinities in this thesis some time is also given over to feminist contributions to the debate.

Where Fielding sees ethnography as "a form of qualitative research' (1993:154)

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) usefully discuss 'what is ethnography'. They do so in terms which they intend to "steer a course between an abstract, methodological treatise and a practical 'cookbook' (1983:x). They seek to go beyond a dispute between research methods informed by what they call positivism and naturalism to concentrate on reflexivity; a reflexivity that relies neither on positivist nor naturalist empiricism. They declare, "all social research takes the form of participant observation: it involves participating in the social world, and reflecting on the products of that participation." (1983:16).

For Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) positivism is the use of a 'neutral observation language' to develop 'universal laws' using the logic and methods of science such as the experiment (in which variables can be directly manipulated) or the survey (in which variables can be manipulated statistically). This enables results to be tested or falsified. They draw attention to positivism's long history and its connections with philosophy, in the form of 'logical positivism'. For the purposes of this research the connection must also be drawn between positivism and American sociology and sociological criminology as well as the long shadow of Lombroso. Criminology is frequently asserted to have begun with Lombroso and his search for the innate characteristics of individuals that caused crime. Garland (1994) gives the 'Lombrosian project' equal weight to the 'governmental project' in the formation of modern criminology. Cohen (1981) charts its continued importance to conventional, mainstream criminology. The 'government project' continues today as 'new administrative criminology' (Young, 1994). Both the 'Lombrosian project' and the 'Government project' rely on empiricism. As Young says:

There are, of course, and always have been, criminologists who believe they are merely adding to the stock of knowledge, free from ideological preconceptions. These are inevitably those most trapped within a paradigm - usually the positivist. The great Anglo-Saxon tradition of empiricism is a form of theoretical blindness: the parading of a hidden agenda of atomistic caricatures of human nature and simplistic notions of social order.(1994:70)

From a feminist perspective Naffine has this to say:

Criminologists of the empirical sort are, therefore, committed to a traditional ideal of objectivity. When they study an object, they must strive to get themselves out of the field of vision, out of the line of enquiry - and they believe it is feasible to do this. (1997:22)

More radically opposed to the possibility of an agreed scientific method is Feyerabend (1988). His anarchistic relativism insists that, "Science is an essentially anarchic enterprise: theoretical anarchism is more humanitarian and more likely to encourage progress than its law-and-order alternatives.", that, "We may advance science by proceeding counterinductively." and

Hypotheses contradicting well-confirmed theories give us evidence that cannot be obtained in any other way. Proliferation of theories is beneficial for science, while uniformity impairs its critical power. Uniformity also endangers the free development of the individual." (1988:5)

Here he challenges not only the Viennese positivism of his former mentor, Popper, but also the scientific claims of fellow anarchist, Kropotkin. For Feyerabend, "Scientists are sculptors of reality...they create the semantic conditions leading to strong inferences from known

effects to new and surprising projections.” (1988:270). Similarly ethnographers shape their accounts in ways that are amenable to literary criticism (Atkinson, 1990) so scientists conjure up an appropriate ontology.

Opposed to positivism is naturalism which, according to Matza, has a commitment, “to phenomena and their nature; not to Science or any other system of standards” (1964:3). Matza was then seeking to deny the claims of science to be naturalistic and its positivistic insistence on the scientific method, insisting that naturalism, “cannot commit itself to any single preferred method for engaging and scrutinising phenomena” (1964:5). He rails against ‘primitive social scientists’ who take ‘man’ as the object of study rather than its subject. The taking of ‘man’ as the object of enquiry in criminology is frequently associated with, what Matza calls, ‘correctionalism’ which insists on causal explanations of crime, for whom a “concern with the nuances and character of the phenomena itself seemed idle, literary or romantic” (1964:87) .

For Hammersley and Atkinson the extreme position of naturalism is the demand that ethnographers “ ‘surrender’ themselves to the cultures they wish to study” (1983:14) as a way of eliminating the effects of researcher bias by direct unmediated experience of the social world. Though Goffman notes that he did not sleep on the wards and “I did not allow myself to be committed even nominally” (1968:7). Hammersley and Atkinson offer their own remedy in the form of ‘reflexivity’. They are seeking to persuade ethnography away from naturalist empiricism and positivism away from its reliance on empiricism towards a reflexivity that straddles both traditions. They contend that it is an “existential fact” (1983:15) that “we are part of the social world we study” (1983:14) so common-sense knowledge is not rejected but interrogated and the possibility of researcher effect on social effects welcomed as potentially informative; as “all social research, and indeed all social life, is founded upon participant observation” (1983:234-235) but as Downes and Rock note criminology itself is an eclectic, practical discipline where, “ ‘Reflexive’ theory which urges the theorist to study himself as he theorizes is held to be especially burdensome.” (1988:212). Yet what is proposed in this thesis is reflexivity. This is in line with Naffine’s question: “what has gone wrong with the discipline of criminology that it should remain so reluctant to reflect critically upon its own worldview.” (1997:9) She goes on to identify Ian Taylor and Vincenzo Ruggiero as opponents of “the present dominance of an atheoretical and unreflective scientific approach in criminology” (1997:28) and goes on to say:

What we are observing is the reign of an often unreflective science of criminology, which neither examines its own particular ideologies (its own specific world view) nor speculates about the consequent intellectual and ethical value of the criminological enterprise (why it is doing what it is doing). We see, instead, a pre-occupation with the scientific study of of criminal man... But the gaze is unidirectional. Criminology examines criminal man but does not look back at himself to discover the nature of its own identity and how it shapes the very nature of the scientific process, including the very identity of criminal man himself. (1997:28-29)

Reflexivity and sensitivity to research subjects are typically associated with feminist research to the extent that opponents might call ‘subjective’ or ‘emotional’. This requires a feminist critique of methods in general and of ethnography in particular. If there is an “epistemological brawl” (Pawson and Tilley,1994:291) then it is between feminists such as

Ramazanoglu (1992) and 'methodologists' such as Hammersley (1994). Since research methods are designed to gain knowledge about a research problem epistemological questions cannot be avoided.

For Ramazanoglu the purpose of feminist research is "the transformation of gender relations" (1992:207) which requires the empowerment of women. For her current methods, marked by 'male reason', actively work against the political project of feminism so distinctive methods need to be developed upon different epistemological ground. Smart (1990) usefully sets out how feminism has responded to the modernist, positivistic theories and methods of criminology, she in turn draws on Harding (1987). These responses are feminist empiricism, standpoint feminism and feminist post-modernism.

Feminist empiricism accepts the need for objective empirical research but points out the androcentric bias produced within a male-based academy. That bias includes the implicit and explicit sexism of the wider society reproduced within the research questions posed and the answers proposed. Therefore within criminology the work of Carlen (1988), Eaton (1986) and Mooney (1993) are examples. Empirical but motivated by a concern for women Harding sees the radical potential of such studies in putting wife abuse on the agenda. However, Smart argues that it also presents little threat to established criminology, "men can go on studying men and the relevances of men as long as they acknowledge that it is men and not humanity they are addressing" (1990:78). The evidence of the contributions to the first edition of the compendious *Oxford Handbook of Criminology* suggests that little acknowledgement is even given to this empirical 'fact'.

Smart points out, too, a distinction which can be drawn between empiricism as an epistemological stance and empirical method. As feminists they moved away from the empiricism of positivist studies of 'offenders' towards the empiricism of ethnography with gendered, but usually women offenders or victims. This led to the many attempts to prove discrimination in the criminal justice system which necessarily take men as the norm from which women or the treatment of women deviate and fails to question the neutrality of the law itself.

Empirical work may reveal the experience of women as offender or victim but standpoint feminism places that experience at the centre of its concern and argues that a specifically feminist knowledge can be based upon this epistemological base. As Smart (1990:80) puts it:

...not just any experience is deemed to be equally valuable or valid. *Feminist* experience is achieved through a struggle against oppression; it is, therefore, argued to be more complete and less distorted than the perspective of the ruling group of men. A feminist standpoint then is not just the experience of women, but of women *reflexively* engaged in struggle (intellectual and political). ...This stance does not divide knowledge from values and politics but sees knowledge arising from engagement.

It is this fusion that upsets Hammersley (1994) where Ramazanoglu states, "knowledge is intrinsically political" (1992:210). Hammersley states equally clearly in opposition the purity of the research project which is "to produce knowledge, not to transform the world, or to achieve any other practical result" (1994:293). Smart argues that standpoint feminism has had little

influence in feminist criminology, and therefore in criminology, but that the action research of feminists into rape and male violence has allowed problems with no name to acquire them.

Where it has been influential in criminology it is in left realism which she accuses of 'resort' to women's experience of crime as 'justification'. She also claims that feminists within realism are not wholly aligned with left realism because of their political reluctance to turn their attention to masculinities. She is not explicit on this point but implicitly she argues that left realism ought to tackle gender issues but has given over the task to radical feminism or simply incorporated the insights on feminism on these issues thereby ignoring the 'reality' of men's genderedness.

Young's (1992) elucidation of the ten points of realism deploys references to the concerns of the women's movement and to the research of feminists and is clear on the specificity of social context. This makes the relative deprivation of "boys on the Lower East Side of Manhattan" and "girls in Florence" (1992:38) different yet there is no sense that gender itself forms a theorised part of the nature of crime, that is its form, social context, time trajectory and spatial dimension.

A corrective is to hand though in the work of Carlen (1992) who prefers left realism over the feminist anti-criminology of Smart (1990). Her critical reading of left realism may not have turned its attention to masculinity but her commitment to perpetual questioning of knowledge production including feminism and realism opens the possibility of a fully gendered left realism which rejects, "the absurdity of the notion that there is a distinctly feminist *method* in criminology or sociology" (1992:55) and is not afraid to "make judgements, as to more or less desirable states of affairs" (1992:63).

Male-orientated criminology has offered its own standpoints before, Cain (1990b) notes Becker's (1967) taking of sides and Matza's opposition to correctionalism can be seen in this light too, as might Gilroy's defence of black youth (1987). Cain discusses the feminist standpoint of Hartsock (1983) which posits a feminist standpoint epistemology which is the opposite of male demands for absolute truths revealed by the rigid application of reason which objectifies the subject of research and separates rather than unifies theory and practice but particularly excludes emotion and experience. On the contrary women's experience of participating in both the abstract world of men as subordinates and in their own more embodied, concrete world made it easier for them to unify theory and practice objectivity and involvement. Hartsock gives some weight to women's involvement in domestic production and reproduction and also to the bodily blurring involved in sex and childbirth all of which make both concrete and holistic ways of thinking easier for women. This position is a privileged one but still requires to be chosen, hence Smart's reference to the struggle. Cain makes the point that sex involves 'blurring' for men too.

Smart's final category is feminist postmodernism, which "unlike standpoint feminism it does not seek to impose a different unitary reality...Thus the aim of feminism ceases to be the establishment of the feminist truth and becomes the deconstruction of truth and the analysis of the power effects which claims to truth entail" (1990:82). She gives as an example of a Foucauldian feminist understanding of rape which seeks to examine the discourses by which,

“the vagina comes to be coded - and experienced - as a place of emptiness and vulnerability, the penis as a weapon” (Woodhull, 1988:171). That is how the feminist standpoint of women’s experience of rape actually privileges the coding of the female body as vulnerable and therefore concedes to men that power over them which it seeks to overturn. For Smart the impact of postmodernism on criminology is to render it in need of feminism but not *vice versa*. For her, it is, “hard to see what criminology has to offer feminism.” (1990:84). Carlen (1992) sees what perhaps Smart is unwilling to concede that the deconstruction by postmodernists applies to feminism too.

Some examples of feminist work are examined below. Mies (1993) sets out a strict doctrine that the ‘new wine’ of feminism should not be put in the old patriarchal bottles of existing methodology, arguing much like Ramazanoglu that, “there is a contradiction between the prevalent theories of social science and methodology and the political aims of the women’s movement” (1993:66). Therefore, “feminist women must deliberately and courageously integrate their repressed, unconscious female subjectivity, that is, their own experience of oppression and discrimination into the research process” (1993:68). This requires ‘conscious partiality’ in favour of women but should not be confused with, “mere subjectivism or simple empathy” (1993:68). She enjoins the feminist researcher to be active in the struggle for women’s emancipation and give the view from below. Like Ramazanoglu she wishes to change the status quo and quotes Mao Tse Tung on the need to chew the pear if one wants to know the taste. To extend her metaphor the survey, in particular, fails to chew any pears and consequently cannot describe the taste or the texture only the size and numbers of pears. Extending her metaphor further it can be seen that she also wants this research to enable women collectively to taste the pears in the men’s orchard.

Conversely, Jayaratne (1993) recognises the failure of traditional research methods to address the questions important to women, its use to support the continued subordination of women and its objectification of them but argues that these methods should not be rejected outright. She also recognises that such methodology is often chosen because it produces significant results quickly and therefore feeds the needs of untenured academic to publish rather than perish. Such ‘quick and dirty’ procedures are often methodologically unsound but such is the seductiveness of the serried ranks of objective facts policy makers continue to prefer them. She argues that both the apparent objectivity of quantitative methods and its actual objectivity can have influence with policy makers for women.

Kelly (1990) illustrates this with her own research journey which is the reverse of that described by Reinharz (1979) in *On Becoming a Social Scientist*. Kelly sets out firmly convinced of the possibility of creating a feminist methodology and drew on her experience of activism in the women’s movement with rape crisis lines and refuges in her PhD. It was research *with* and *for* women. It was her intention to end the ‘silencing’ of women by men’s violence by using her research to ‘name’ that violence and its male perpetrators. She saw that asking, ‘have you ever been raped’ was very different from ‘have you ever been forced to have sex’. Only face-to-face interviews with women by women are likely to reveal the numbers of women coerced into sex and the extent of violence involved in ‘forced’. This is certainly the criticism levelled at the

British Crime Survey and to a lesser extent at the Islington Crime Survey. So there was a political commitment to women but also a pragmatic concern to increase the validity of her research. However, the issues raised troubled many of the women. This required her to give ongoing support to her respondents. She was able to give that but recognises that not all researchers, not even all feminist researchers, would be to offer that amount of support so an impersonal questionnaire might have enabled the women more control of their emotions.

Kelly recognises that supporting women is not the same as empowering them and records that attempts to involve women in the research (Mies 'bottom up view') are not unproblematic - they may even reject the researchers efforts at collaborative research and expect the researcher to do the work of analysis. The practicalities of funding and the subject studied ensured that the next project she discusses is not *with* women so much as *for* them - investigating the services offered by agencies in a London borough to women suffering violence from male partners. This involved a mixed methodology including questionnaires but also provided respondents with information on services available to women. Finally the exigencies of funding meant that a project which was to investigate child sex abuse using both self-report questionnaires and in-depth interviews ultimately relied on the questionnaires. Kelly sees that, "Certain research questions, important to feminists, can only be answered where relatively large numbers, and a cross-section of the population, participate in the study" (1990:113). This still leaves the difficulty of devising questions that reveal the extent of child sex abuse without further abusing the children in the questioning process and offers the chance of support through links with local services. It is this concern for the researched that makes this recognisably feminist as a method.

A further variety of views is provided by Gelsthorpe in her discussion of the practicalities of bringing her feminism to research methods in criminology. She concludes, in opposition to Mies, that feminist research is 'good' research under a new name, that is, "old wine in new bottles" (1990:89). She also usefully summarises some of the components of feminist research. Distilled these are: the priority of 'what to research' over 'how to research' (research 'by, on and for' women or 'for' women and therefore possibly with men); a preference for qualitative over quantitative (though some feminists would allow sensitive use of survey methods and interviews); a concern for the power differentials between researcher and researched, objective social scientist and mere data, which thereby requires a less hierarchic, more participative mode of research; and finally a concern with "the subjective experience of doing research" (1990:93), that is to be accurate without accepting uncritically given (male) definitions of objectivity.

Whatever, view of feminism or feminist research chosen it is clear how these could effect women's research into matters of immediate concern to women. Gelsthorpe notes the obviousness of the approach for violence against women but goes on to show how it can transform more conventional topics by discussing some of her own research on prisons, the CPS, social inquiry reports and the arrears court. These very mundane, 'criminal justice process' settings aimed at policy outcomes are very informative about how feminism can transform traditional methods, even when subject and method have been imposed.

Her work as a contract researcher for a male project director into male prisons in which

gender was not an issue identified in the research proposal is illustrative. Her experience caused her to note the extent to which “experience, age, sex and ethnicity influences the field researcher’s role is often underplayed, if not ignored, in more traditional approaches to research which do not ask how far personal biography and experience influence the research role..” (1990:95). She could not be ‘one of the boys’, though an female assistant governor’s involvement in union matters was seen to give her a ‘pseudo man’ status. Just as trade union activity can enable a woman to acquire manly status so, counterintuitively, can an otherwise marginalised sexuality - note Burke’s finding that whilst admitted or suspected homosexuality worked against male police officers it could work for lesbians in making them ‘man’ enough for the job (Burke,1994). She notes that her introduction as “Dr Gelsthorpe” lead many to believe her interest was medical like that of the many female psychologists staff and inmates were used to seeing. Other potential roles for an otherwise unplaceable female presence were probation officer, Board of Visitors member or magistrate. The need to be good listeners for the research and preconceptions about female empathy meant she was often sought out as a ‘counsellor’. Whilst she noted these, and other gender issues, did feminism transform the research? On reflection Gelsthorpe felt unable to separate a feminist and non-feminist self so cannot be sure but was sure that feminism did sensitise her to the gender issues and to ways of interviewing, particularly in not insisting that only she ask the questions and only respondents answer them (Oakley, 1981). She also specifically sought to include the experiences of women as wives and mothers of men in prison.

In her work on the CPS Gelsthorpe specifically rejected a solely qualitative ethnographic study of girls, taking “a ‘feminist’ approach [...] to mean a focus on ‘gender’ not an exclusive focus on women and girls” (1990:100) and for the practical reason that relatively few girls were prosecuted. The very hierarchic nature of the agencies involved ruled out a feminist insistence on collaborative research with extensive researcher/researched communication.

Her work on gender and ethnicity in social inquiry reports calls out for feminist methodology but she actually inherited the research at a point where data collection instruments and interview schedules had already been drafted. The method included both pairwise matching of a number of variables against ethnicity and gender but also content analysis of reports and semi-structured interviews with report writers. She notes a more feminist approach would have allowed defendants a say in what they saw as sexist or racist. She points out that as a middle-class, white academic with no experience of being a defendant her view of what is sexist or racist may differ from those reported on. A small scale interactionist account of the processes whereby defendants, officers and magistrates together create a joint, but unequal account might also have been considered. This might have allowed for the interests of the defendant to be brought into focus and posed against that of the ‘expert’.

The research into the arrears court was sparked by the observation that women were over represented but the methods themselves were multiple: court records, observation and interviews with defendants. The feminism is apparent in her willingness to end interviews with defendants if they became too distressed; arranging legal and financial advice and aims to discuss the findings with the magistrates with the aim of ameliorating the court’s practice for future defendants.

Gelsthorpe in her conclusion muses on how feminist reflexivity has helped her think through research she confesses that:

it feels vulnerable to write this way it does demonstrate a key feminist principle: viewing the researcher's involvement in and experience of the research as both problematic and valid (1990:105)

Perhaps it is a mark of how deep academic habits run that even in this moment of vulnerability she cannot bring herself to say "I feel vulnerable doing this" or "it scared me". Finally she concludes that it is difficult to distinguish between good research and feminist research and that, "...feminist research can be carried out with men as the focus (and carried out by men)...".

However there are also radical and postmodern roots to reflective practice and theory as the work of Willis (1997) and Tyler (1997) suggest. Willis notes the,

insistent, almost neurotic, technical concern with the differentiation of participant observation from reportage and Art [...] that PO belongs with the 'sciences' and must, in the end, respect objectivity. There is a clear sociological fear of naked subjectivity. (1997:246)

and Tyler goes one step beyond with his observation that:

The problem with the realism of natural history is not, as is often claimed, the complexity of the so-called object of observation, nor failure to apply sufficiently rigorous and replicable methods, nor even less the seeming intractability of the language of description. It is instead a failure of the whole visualist ideology of referential discourse, with its rhetoric of 'describing,' 'comparing,' 'classifying,' and 'generalising' and its presumption of representational signification. In ethnography there are no 'things' there to be objects of a description...(1997:257).

Whereas Willis proposes his own - marxist - version of reflexivity Tyler's postmodernism leaves him only 'evoking' in his ethnography not 'describing'. Clearly the early chapters of this thesis seek to describe but in Chapter 8 some emphasis is placed upon the capacity of the media to 'evoke' images that the influence car purchase (and other uses).

So how does this thesis handle objectivity and subjectivity? What place is given to reflection? The writers cited above witness the theoretical difficulty of achieving objectivity and being a male car-driver with green pretensions adds to the difficulty of objectivity about spectacular car use (see Groombridge, 1995c for more details). However, there is no intention to be subjective - though the green perspective adds a polemic standpoint. Whilst my own total immersion in my gender and the UK's car culture makes for difficulties it provides much material for checking the statements of male joyriders, project workers, criminal justice personnel, media and politicians. Moreover, a good deal of the theory building and analysis has been done in car journeys - to and from fieldwork, to work, to leisure facilities and in domestic duties. And, yes I did feel much during fieldwork and preparation (see Groombridge, 1995c). My moments of greatest vulnerability remain as an occasional cycle commuter; saddling this work with yet another 'standpoint'.

constructing the research vehicle

Before discussing the actual methods used it is necessary to attempt to set some of the arguments of feminism into the context of a male researcher examining cultural practices and research settings which are associated with men and often exclusively peopled by men. Whilst Connell (1995:69) argues that, “modern epistemology recognizes, there is no description without a standpoint” his discussion of masculinities and the methods he used to explore them contains no discussion of epistemology.

Science and ‘social science’ demand objectivity. Objectivity is posited as the opposite of subjective in the discourse of both natural and social science. However, they share a belief in the self. In the case of objectivity the self has to be effaced whereas with subjectivity the self is supreme. The obliteration of the self and the selves of others is associated with masculine reason. The concern for the selves of others and for self is associated with femininity. This is a traditional stereotypical depiction of the relation of self to science but even if the terms were reversed the belief in the self remains. However, within philosophy, sociology and cultural studies doubts have been cast on the self which move beyond ‘who am I?’ to ‘what am I?’. For as Naffine argues of male criminologists:

Nor do they reflect much upon the fact that they themselves (that is, as criminologists) are mainly men, and that as (mainly white, all educated and so middle-class) men they might see the world in a particular and specific, not neutral and universal way. (1997:9)

If the researcher is to speak about ‘others’ objectivity requires that the self is effaced. On the other hand subjectivity may substitute the self of the researcher for that of the other much as a vanguardist party might substitute itself for the ‘people’. Is there a way out of this, a way of speaking about others which acknowledges doubts about the selfhood of both the speaker and the spoken about? Probyn (1993:111) notes, “the trick, at the present moment, is to think and use the self - to follow lines of subjectification - without falling into humanist and universal individualism” but, “the problem is how to get to the self without going through the individual” (1993:119).

For her the answer lies in a particular reading of Foucault which makes, “it clear that the self is not an entity that can be represented; rather it is in the articulation of problematizations and practices that certain modalities of the self historically emerge” (1993:128). However, she warns, “At the same time, it is not an instruction to throw our selves over the brink into madness. The self has to be stretched but not broken, folded but not rendered schizophrenic” (1993:129). For Probyn it is important not only that a discourse is spoken, but who speaks it hence her attempt to find a way for women to speak of the self and others against the historical and contemporary background of being spoken as other. This feminist concern for women’s capacity to speak is, however, illustrated by quoting Hebdige (1985:38) on , “finding ways of linking with and expressing emergent and residual forms of masculine identity”. Her intention is to show how, “the self may be used epistemologically to reveal the nature of the articulation, and ontologically to acknowledge the affectivity of the articulation” (1993:134) or more simply in Hebdige’s words, “We have to go on making connections, to *bear* our witness and to *feel* the times we’re

living through” (1985:39).

It is interesting that Hebdige uses the feminine metaphor of birth rather than the more ‘seminal’ metaphor of testament. This may be adherence to ‘political correctness’ but there are epistemological and ontological consequences to the metaphor of birth. It suggests a process of becoming and a tentativeness about the completeness of our knowledge about it. Whereas testifying (swearing on one’s balls) that such a thing is a fact asserts ontology and certitude as to our knowledge of it.

Probyn, Hebdige and Foucault all set out ‘sociologies of the self’ that undermine the certainties of (social) science’s capacity to speak without a self (objectivity) and even of standpoint feminisms foregrounding of the subjected female self. The self can neither obscure nor authenticate. Instead Probyn offers the self as “toolkit” (1993:128). This is a coincidentally happy metaphor for the subject of joyriding and car use. The toolkit to be used in understanding joyriding not only contains my self/selves but also particular methodological tools which differ little from those of more conventional research. The difference, perhaps, is the way I handle them. If I am clumsy will my spanner burr the edge of the nut without releasing it from the bolt; better that than hammering it. All the methodological tools used will be discussed in respect of their utility to the task rather than their conformity to fixed ideas of how they should be used to reveal an objective (social) scientific truth untainted by my (subjective) blood (the hammer, my thumb) amongst the oil and swarf.

Mies and Ramazanoglu are in a good position to argue for a distinctive women’s or feminist perspective. There is an identifiable, if diffuse, women’s movement and ongoing oppression of women and their voice. Their research practice can therefore seek to heal the rift between women’s experience and the methods used to set out experience. For a man interested in using some of those methods there is even less of an organised men’s movement to relate to and profound arguments about the extent to which men are oppressed. The men’s movement can be seen as interested in restoring a lost masculinity, drumming in the woods with *Iron John* (Bly, 1990) or groups like Families Need Father’s more concerned with regaining access to their children and fighting the Child Support Agency.

From all of the discussion above some guidelines for this research can be set out. Some of those guidelines are positive others negative but all are tentative. As should be clear it is not possible to state precise guidelines for research generally, similarities of nomenclature obscure real differences of practice, similar practices can be justified from a variety a methodological positions. This does not mean that methodologically anything goes though Feyerabend’s (1988) critique of science is a useful corrective to mindless emulation of its ‘methods’. However, even if clear guidelines could be agreed they are most likely to be quantitative or from the empiricist and positivist wings of qualitative research. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) and more strongly feminism argues for a reflexivity that looks uncomfortably like ‘subjectivity’ to those trained in an ‘objectivist’ tradition. Moreover, men cannot simply take over a feminist position, even where permission has been given. It is for these reasons that the guidelines set out below are tentative.

There is no broad equivalent to 'feminist methodology' for men - except a reversion to the practice of ignoring gender whilst claiming the male as universal - that can be taken off-the-shelf, nor are these thoughts offered as one. Borrowings from Cain (1990a & b), Matza (1964) and the sociologists of the 'self' should be particularly noted as should a concern with 'realist' themes but critical - even 'idealist' - concerns tinged with postmodern doubts. The purpose of the research is not to reveal the underlying truth about joyriders or joyriding nor to align itself with correctionalism (even social democratic left realist correctionalism) as Ruggiero (1992:137) notes, "An approach strictly focussed on the mission of resolving problematic situations may in fact obstruct an understanding of their scope and dimensions".

Starting with the negative, and specific to this research, no claim is made that this is a phenomenology of joyriding or that *verstehen* was achieved with joyriders. The positive elements can be seen best in an engagement with Cain's (1990a) guidelines for 'good quality knowledge'. Cain's guidelines are chosen because they are comprehensive and generally amenable to the intentions of this research(er). There are differences, not least, the extent to which philosophical realism is an appropriate base on which to build. However, it does offer a way to proceed and can be seen for the while as the 'toolbag' in which the 'toolkit' can be kept. Her constructed standpointism avoids the essentialism of Hartsock (1983) but cannot escape the doubts raised by postmodernism (Smart, 1990). Connell's (1995) acceptance of the 'onto-formativity' of practice - that human activity creates reality - appears to support her views.

Cain (1990a) sets out guidelines which are summarised below and related to the actual research undertaken.

First unthought realities require: open techniques (including novel ones); theory which enables new knowledge to be manipulated; open-mindedness about the process of theory building and; the technical capacity to move empirically out from the unit of observation.

Without necessarily accepting the full consequences of realist ontology it is clear that whatever the perceived reality of joyriding there may be as yet unthought realities which have gone, so far, unperceived and that open techniques are required to make it possible to think them. No truly novel techniques are proposed but the number of methods and scope of the investigation may be unusual for criminology.

Theory has been addressed elsewhere but as the disputes of Platt (1986) and Layder (1988) shows its precise connection to method is moot. Cain clearly intends like most feminists that the method and theory follow politics, that is should have a purpose. It is less clear what the politics of research into joyriding is but it is important. The research is *for* men but only in the very long-term. It is also, in these terms, *against* cars. The process of theory building has not been totally open-minded as an early theoretical assumption is that joyriding had affinities with and might best be seen as located within car culture. However, following her stipulation about the public nature of such work it is fairly clear that this assumption has been made but sometimes bracketed off for the purposes of research.

The extent to which this work can be empirically moved out from the specific site must await the 'retrospective heuristic' but some points can be made. Such is the scope of the research both in terms of research sites, methods used and theories investigated that it is difficult to identify a 'unit of observation'. Masculinities and car culture are not congruent terms and even taken together do not comprise the totality of the reality that might be reached out to. Indeed feminisms and opponents of car culture might do well to resist such an imperial gesture. So the 'site' being investigated can be seen to be specific but large. However, where obviously discrete sites are examined - such as the motor projects - then attempts will be made to reach out to a larger reality.

Secondly already recognised realities require the use of hermeneutic investigations into the discourse of those recognising that reality.

What is already known about joyriding (Chapters 1, 2 and 3) stems from the discourses of media outrage, the law and correctionalist criminology. What is known about the car and car culture is taken-for-granted. All these varied and interconnecting discourses need to be analysed. Moreover, the work done on previously unthought realities itself develops a discourse that can be analysed and connections made with other discourses. This analytic work requires methods more common in cultural studies as the discourse is not just what joyriders, press, victims, sentencers or criminologists say about joyriding but can be seen in the practices of joyriders and of car advertisers.

Third, historical change in realities and knowledge about them requires study over time - long time in the field, follow ups or biographical data.

A historical dimension has been built into the discussion of joyriding to show that the known reality of joyriding at its height (media-wise) differs from the known reality of joyriding at other periods in history. The duration of fieldwork at the motor project sites was not long - in terms of standard ethnographies - but has involved follow ups. Moreover, the personal reflexivity of masculinities draws on nearly a lifetime and that on car culture over twenty six years.

Fourth, theoretical reflexivity about the specifics of the site and accountability to those who share your standpoint.

It is difficult to state concisely the size of the site and its specificity other than to repeat that what is being studied is the practice of young men's particular car use which is called joyriding by others - often male - whose own car use cannot be taken-for-granted. This makes for a potentially large site but its specifics should continue to be brought to the fore - the major specifics are men and cars.

Neither the site or these specifics nor any current politics point obviously to a standpoint or group to whom accountability can be rendered. 'Methodologists' are accountable to 'science' or currently acceptable academic practice, feminists see themselves as accountable to women. Were the specifics of this research women or what men do to them then Cain (1990a) and

Gelsthorpe (1990) give a warrant to men to do feminist research and therefore be accountable to women. Indeed research by men into what men do to women or each other should have some accountability to 'men', if not to those men personally. Here the male criminologist may side with the 'correctionalists' intentions if not methods and institutional bias. Nelken (1995:23) is helpful here:

if the subjects of our theorising are not, or cannot be, included in the process of research itself, it becomes all the more important to give attention to the way we 'represent the other'.

Clearly joyriding does effect women (Campbell, 1993) but not in the direct way that domestic violence or rape does. Not only is this research not about individual joyriders as research objects or subjects so it is not about the victims of joyriders. Women, as a 'class' could be seen to suffer from car culture too: they own fewer cars, drive them less often where they have use of them and are positioned within car culture as subordinate. Car culture feeds into public transport policies which amplify the effects for women of that subordinate position and crime and fear of crime impact on both women's car and public transport use (Beuret, 1991). Again this is a large site with its specifics which is not denied by this research. To use a car/planning metaphor this is still a 'green field site' on which only a few footpaths appear, it has not been concreted over, tarmacadamed or by-passed.

Already it is clear it has not been possible to follow the guidelines for the production of 'good quality knowledge' in every detail but they do inform the research and provide a useful way of talking about it. Following, or attempting to follow, the guidelines produces knowledge that Cain says must be made public. That is both personal reflexivity and techniques must be displayed. In this Chapter the techniques are displayed and the influences acknowledged. Her final injunction that theory produced must be inclusive and account "for our own knowledge as well as that of those we investigate" (1993:139) is taken very seriously.

It is necessary to go beyond the empiricism of positivism and the 'objectivity' of academic writing, however, on the other hand pure subjectivism does not advance knowledge either and the self that guarantees it has been cast into doubt by both structuralism and post-modernism. But as Bourdieu says:

Objectivism constitutes the social world as a spectacle offered to an observer who takes up a 'point of view' on the action and who, putting into the object the principles of his relation to the object, proceeds as if it were intended solely for knowledge and as if the interactions within it were purely symbolic exchanges. (1994:95)

The actions of joyriders and the researcher can both be seen within the *habitus* "the system of structured, structuring dispositions...which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions." (1994:95). The theoretical nature of the work can allow the author to hide behind the mask of olympian objectivity. Much of this chapter has been given over to considering how this can be addressed in this research.

Having set out some of the general problems of social research and the specific problems of research into joyriding by a male researcher we now turn to the methods used, which were:

Cultural analysis of film, advertisements and the literature on joyriding on as components/generators of car culture;

Reflexive participant observation of car culture;

Observation and participant observation at motor projects and at meetings of and about motor projects;

Observations of dramas presented in schools aimed at preventing joyriding;

Questionnaires to motor project users and to those referring to them; and

Semi-structured interviews with interested parties to a motor project.

Lash (1995:167) notes approvingly the importance of cultural studies in understanding the significance of information and communications structures in 'reflexive modernity'. Hebdige (1979) discusses briefly the trajectory of cultural studies from Hoggart and Williams different concerns for 'culture', through Barthes semiotics to the concern for structures and hegemony of Althusser and Gramsci. Since then 'cultural studies' have taken a feminist and postmodernist turn. Whilst some of the formalist linguistics, like ethnomethodology, can be seen to have a method that can be described and followed much of 'cultural studies' ultimately relies on 'reading' a text. That 'reading' may be informed by psychoanalytical concepts, a gay sensibility, feminist or marxist polemic or combinations of these and other discourses, politics or practice. Whilst Hebdige clearly sets himself within this tradition - citing Barthes and *Resistance through Rituals* as inspirations - he provides no guide on how to replicate his work. Indeed since the intention is to interpret the culture no exact replication can be expected. As McRobbie says Hebdige,

focusses elliptically on subcultural style as *signifier* rather than as a series of distinct cultural expressions. Style he claims, takes place several steps away from the material conditions of it's followers' existence and continually resists precise historical analysis. One of its objectives, then, is to be forever out of joint with mainstream dominant culture: it evaporates just as it crystallises. (1991:17)

She does not, other than elliptically herself, make the point that Hebdige is so enamoured of style that he, himself, seeks also to remain 'forever out of joint' in his analysis. Whilst - in Chapter 8 - I will argue that joyriders are not a subcultural response I do believe that its meaning is as elusive as the style that Hebdige 'reads' and therefore must also be 'read'.

As can be seen from this brief discussion of Hebdige it is difficult to describe the method by which joyriding can be read. In part, the whole of this thesis is a 'reading' of joyriding rather than research into joyriding that offers a 'precise historical analysis', let alone an aetiology, in the conventional criminological sense. In considering the relationship of joyriding and car culture it

is clear that in addition to a 'reading' of car advertising the literature discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 can also be read as texts in which the discourses of masculinity and car culture are enscribed.

Drawing on Williamson (1978) and Naffine's use of Derrida's 'deconstruction' we can also see that "deconstruction is not destruction" (1997:86). Naffine shows how, in criminology, woman has been a subordinate term on which the dominant term 'man' depends. This has been influential in my views of criminology but a similar deconstruction of the terms of car culture shows how the dominant terms of the safe and useful motor car depend on and bear the trace of subordinated terms such as joyriding and road rage. However, it is not claimed to be an objective method but neither is it based upon random choices. It would be possible to select a tight time period and note all car and petrol adverts and subject them to a content analysis which generates statistics about the relative appearance of men and women, operationalise criteria for 'responsible' and 'irresponsible' messages etc. This might have been warranted had my hypothesis been that these images were implicated in causing joyriding. Then one might measure these and then look for correlations between joyriders and non-joyriders. The argument here is that researcher and researched are saturated by these images and they need to be understood from within. Thus I am not an insider to joyriding but I am an insider to car driving and we are all (car users or not) insiders to car culture.

Broadly then, the 'method' was to select TV, radio and print advertisements which illustrated the connections between gender, joyriding and car culture during the latter period of the research period. So the advertisements do not represent a sample but they are 'representative' and the adverts not covered do not present a different picture which has been suppressed. All the advertisements can be read as having a primary meaning of 'buy our car', even if like the first Nissan Almeira adverts the copy line says "Don't buy this car". However, it is contended that there is a secondary meaning, 'car are good, useful, pleasurable etc' and that in presenting the primary and secondary meanings the advertises refer to previous adverts for their products, other products and other cultural products - high, low or middle-brow. The reference to other products - intertextuality - directly or indirectly connects their product with other products, experiences etc. that signify for the reader/viewer.

My reading of car advertisements is informed by a number of influences: first, my own experience of 'cultural studies' methods gained from the Open University course, *Popular Culture*; and second, my own interaction with car culture and the process of research which added a host of issues around the car and driving to my existing concern for gender.

However, there are problems with these methods related to its subjective nature. It is tempting to stretch the 'reading' to fit the facts or put a gloss on them. Naturally, I believe that my 'reading' is appropriate and informative but I cannot claim it is true or correct. It is easier to illustrate the point by checking Hebdige's reading of subcultural style. As McRobbie hints it is difficult to be sure what Hebdige is saying but he seeks to associate punk and black styles to suggest that these have no necessary connection to class directly and may also be formed by the discourse that condemns them. It would not be appropriate to make a judgement here whether he is right but to note that - unlike many of his colleagues - he does, at least, take the issue of 'race'

seriously. Indeed, 'race' is his way into a discussion of style.

It is therefore ironic that Hebdige allows some elementary mistakes about 'black culture' to mar his reading. In a stylistic inversion he notes the "ominous significance" of the use made of "humble dustbin lids" by the police at the Notting Hill Carnival when they would normally be "the staple of every steel band" (1979:25). That the police used the lids, before the invention of the short and long shields now used, is not in doubt but no steelband makes use of dustbin lids but of oildrums. Second, on page 30 the group are misspelt 'Aswaad', rather than 'Aswad' and; third, on page 143 he describes 'dreadlocks' as "plaited". If they are plaited they will be extensions rather than the natural hair which is twisted into 'locks' with oils. These errors about the culture that he puts at the centre of his 'reading' are worrying - but do not 'disprove' his thesis.

As has been suggested in the section on observations at motor projects and for some of the reasons described in the discussion of feminism and the self in ethnography my life as a man and as a driver and the lives and driving of other men is the object of observation as is most graphically demonstrated in the account below. As Becker (1973:84) admitted "Most of my observation was carried out on the job, and even on the stand as we played". Similarly Corrigan (1979:13) defending his failure to examine girls says, "I was going to have to use a lot of the insights gained from my own adolescent experience". I make the same claim but do not claim that I have a unique epistemological standpoint of being a man or a driver that privileges my account. Indeed, since being a man and a driver may reinforce one-another frequently a transitional standpoint is taken that calls both these standpoints into question. It is not possible to take the standpoint of a non-driving woman but the insights of both feminism and 'green' issues are paradoxically used to achieve some distance from the topic.

The standpoint of radical feminism for women was and continues to be justified as a wellspring for action against patriarchy. As a man my battle with patriarchy is not that of the daughter or wife but that of the son against the father - the authority of what is to count as manliness (or research). Sympathy for my sisters cannot therefore be complete. As the more critical feminists discussed above accept sex and domestic involvement are components of male experience too.

If interactions between joyriders and between joyriders and staff at a motor project were the prime concern of this research extensive long-term participant observation at a motor project would have been a very suitable method of research. There is a long history of this form of ethnography in anthropology and sociology. Given the age and class background of the researcher participant observation of joyriding directly would have proved difficult, however several very short periods of participant observation at motor projects were undertaken. As will be seen below the number and duration of these visits is insufficient to qualify as 'participant observation' in the classical sense but for the reasons set out at the end of Chapter 3 they were sufficient to suggest that extensive theoretical work was needed on issues around masculinity (including how to research it) and car culture. Moreover, the visits confirmed the findings (and absences) of the literature discussed at length in Chapters 2 and 3. The burden of participant

observation was shifted from the limited setting of the motor project to the researcher's own experience of car culture.

Observations were made by attending the TRAX Motor Project, Oxfordshire, for all or part of nine evenings from September 1993 to July 1994, roughly once a month. A similar amount of time was spent at the Ilderton Motor Project (12 times between February and July 1993). Access to both was easily achieved, particularly the TRAX project as the researcher had been contracted to carry out an evaluation of the project. Previous association with the Probation Service through the Home Office meant that a number of other motor projects had been visited prior to commencing the research (Bradford Motor Education Project and West Midlands Probation Service Projects at the Birmingham Wheels Park). Additional knowledge about motor projects had also been gained through reports of these and other projects (Dragon Wheels, Swansea; DRIVE, Durham; Telford Motor Project, Shropshire and Walker Wheels, Newcastle) as well as membership of and attendance at AGMs of the National Association of Motor Projects. Follow up visits to Ilderton and discussions with staff there have also been undertaken. Three banger race meetings were attended with the projects - one an open meeting at Wimbledon Stadium where over 17 years olds raced against drivers from private teams, the other part of an open meeting but where younger drivers raced only against other motor projects under the auspices of the National Association of Motor Projects.

The purpose of 'hanging around' the projects was made clear to those attending and those working at and with the projects: a) to evaluate the project and b) to contribute to the researcher's own study of joyriding. Additionally access was given to Management Committee meetings of the TRAX project. This was in the role as researcher to the project. This was clearly overt but had an unintended covert side. Sometimes attendance at meetings was to meet people and to hear their opinion; these therefore served inadvertently as discussion groups. Other meetings were ostensibly for the researcher to report progress and make suggestions.

Two performances of an 'anti-joyriding play' were also observed. It was also decided to revisit the schools a couple of weeks later and talk to the children and teachers about its impact. Work produced by the children in the weeks after the performance was also examined. Finally the actors were questioned informally on the success of the play and the differences in children's, and teachers, reactions. Performances at two schools on 28 April 1993 were observed. This was described in Chapter 1.

The school for the morning performance was John Milton Primary School is near New Covent Garden and the Dogs Home. It is set beside a main road and next to a number of estates. It is about 10 minutes walk from the gentrification of 'South Chelsea'. Pupils of Sir James Barrie School also attended. There are about 40 children, slightly more girls than boys. Only a quarter are white. The majority of pupils are of Afro-Caribbean descent. There are a few children of Asian and Chinese descent. The children are a little unruly to start but soon become rapt in the performance. Quieter moments occasioned some restlessness. The prime target audience here totals 3 young white boys.

The second school to be visited in the afternoon is John Burns School. This is located in an area of attractive terraced housing. Because of the absence of a staff member a total of about 100 are going to watch the performance but only the top class of 10 11 year olds will participate in the workshop. In the introduction the mention of joyriding seems to occasion some knowing glances amongst some of the boys. A teacher later confided that she thinks one boy is involved with older boys who might be joyriding. He is black but many more children at this school are white.

As part of an evaluation of the TRAX Motor Project (Groombridge, 1994) a small survey was conducted amongst users of (members) and referrers (agencies) to the project. The first thing to note is that the survey, comprising two questionnaires, was intended to augment observations and interviews already completed at the project. Ideally the total population to be surveyed would have been identified and an appropriate sample taken. Questions would have been asked on a wider variety of topics and in a sufficiently tight way to allow quantification and cross tabulation of variables.

To maximize cooperation the questionnaires to users - some of whose literacy was poor - had to be kept short. To allow for comparisons some of the questions to members and to agencies were the same. This necessarily meant that these were often simplistic though usefully provocative. The questionnaires for the TRAX Team members were handed out by the researcher at the 'chip break' to those attending on two separate nights to the under and over 17 teams with a brief verbal explanation repeating the purpose of the research and of the guarantee of confidentiality. They were collected at the end of the break by the researcher. Those for agencies were sent to key persons in the Magistracy, Social Services, Youth Service and Probation Service asking that they bring them to the attention of colleagues.

In total ten TRAX team members and nineteen members of outside agencies completed questionnaires. The researcher's personal observation of the TRAX team members suggests that they represent a 'core' of those regularly attending with some peripheral members there by chance that evening. The total number of Magistrates and staff numbers in the Youth Service, Social and Probation Services are not known but nineteen cannot be considered a representative sample, moreover they are most likely to be those with an interest in or knowledge of TRAX. They may also have been influenced unduly by the key person to whom the questionnaires were sent. The questionnaires are set out in full with the accompanying letter/instructions at Appendix 1 (agencies) and 2 (members).

Eleven interviews were carried out with respondents with an interest in the TRAX Motor Project - from police to teachers. Some interviewees were able to represent more than one view; a councillor could give the view of local people, themselves and often of a group or other committee to which they belong - for example one was also a Magistrate. Most were interviewed for about three quarters of an hour in a semi-structured manner about joyriding and the contribution that TRAX made to its prevention or 'cure'. One group of magistrates were interviewed in a group in the presence of the Justices' Clerk. See Appendix 3 for interview schedule.

conclusion

This chapter has spent some time reviewing methodological issues, particularly critiques raised by feminism. It is not possible to simply employ those methods out of context. Anarchist arguments for no methods are rejected and the plurality of postmodern concerns noted. Ultimately the methods chosen reflect the reality of joyriding but the extent to which that reality is constituted by both the discourses around and the materiality of the car.