

# Metaphors of the Field: Varieties of Organizational Discourse

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## LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

There is a tradition in the analysis of social life that treats the social world as an independently perceivable phenomenon, something that observers delineate, describe, and make coherent. Observation and the observer stand removed. Recent trends in social philosophy challenge this subject-object distinction, viewing as isomorphic the seer and the seen, the knower and the known (Ryan, 1970). The correspondence theory of truth is rejected, for within a phenomenological perspective, there is no single "correct" reading of the "external world," no proper way in which facts must be selected and presented, and no arrangement, emplotment or presentation, or encodation that is uncontroversially correct or valid. The implications of this position for fieldwork should be recognized. The utility of this position has not been fully appreciated for although most sociologists would accept this "perspectival" view of social analysis, they are unaware of the range of interpretive options. They remain wedded to the correspondence version of truth.<sup>1</sup>

The problem of qualitative analysis based on fieldwork is that of avoiding solipsism on the one hand and avoiding positivism on the other. One approach to this problem is to make language the locus of analysis and not to confuse the language systems used to "explain" or formulate the world with the objects of study. The error here would be to mistake modes of analytic or scientific discourse for relationships among objects inhabiting a posited semantic domain such as the input-output world of Leontief, the operational-experimental world of the behaviorist, or the world of state in Hobbes. The thrust of phenomenological analysis is to make the language system into which experience, behaviors, symbols, and facts are cast a subject of concern.

In organizational analysis, the issue of perspective is raised once one contrasts the imagery used to "see" or represent organizations. The basic idea of perspective, or a way of viewing the social world, is infrequently discussed in organizational analysis. When distinctions are drawn between schools, frames of reference, or approaches (cf. Perrow, 1972; Haas and Drabek, 1973; Etzioni, 1975; Zey-Farrell, 1979), they are described as if the language systems by which they are characterized were ways of reflecting facts in the social world rather than as metaphors for constituting the facts. Important criticisms of the assumed world captured by these writers are found in the works of several scholars (Benson, 1975, 1977a, 1977b; Brown, 1976; Manning, 1977, forthcoming a; Pondy, 1977), especially the recent, provocative writings of Weick (1976, 1977).

## THE MASTER TROPES

There are several implications of the criticisms of Weick and others of organizational analysis and of the place of language in social research. The most profound issue raised is what is an organization. If "organization" is a label with a set of domain assumptions about the semantic space in which it operates, and a set of implicit meanings that are tacitly assigned to behaviors, then it cannot be a concrete, un-

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Field researchers in the tradition of symbolic interactionism such as Becker (1970), McCall and Simmons (1969), and Denzin (1979) view the world as an "out there" to be measured, that measurements possess various degrees of validity and reliability, and that measurement problems are ultimately to be resolved by data. Critics such as Cicourel (1964, 1968, 1973), Johnson (1975), and Douglas (1976) argue, in a position consistent with the argument presented here, that observers create a domain of interest through concepts and perspectives, affirm it by selective and selected measures and, in a sense, construct the social world through these actions. The critics raise the specter of solipsism by considering all analyses of the social world to be problematic accounts rather than objective descriptions subject to confirmation or disconfirmation through scientific investigation.

equivocal, phenomenologically invariant thing. The environment cannot be usefully seen as a single object, nor can the organization. The various ways in which language mediates between the world and perceptions of the world are a primary locus of analysis. Methodological analysis must discover discourse. Styles of discourse must be examined as they play roles in the gathering and analysis of field data. These styles or *tropes* are central to literary or textual analysis. Social analysis involves both creating and criticizing texts. White (1978) has suggested, in a brilliant collection of essays, that tropes (following Burke, 1962) are stylistic means by which discourse constitutes the objects which it "pretends" only to describe "realistically" and analyze "objectively." Master modes or tropes are metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony, and as such they represent the means of encodation and emplotment of the narrative and the way in which facts are made arguable. Each of these tropes will be examined here as the basis for analyzing and gathering field data.

From metaphor, or ways of seeing things *as if* they were something else, flow the related tropes. Metaphor asserts a "similarity in difference and, at least implicitly, a difference in similarity" (White, 1978: 72). Metaphor is the broader principle under which metonymy and synecdoche "operate." By asserting a similarity through the use of metaphor, the author sets something apart from other things; establishes its differences from them; but also, by seeing the object in terms of the metaphor, the object is seen as partaking of the qualities or properties of that by which it is labeled. Implicit meanings are transformed across linguistic boundaries. Metaphoric thinking maintains "double vision" (Brown, 1976: 175). By holding an object simultaneously in two or more points of view, it is enriched. We can vacillate between two levels of understanding while being aware that each has an "as if" quality. Metaphoric work should involve transfer of meanings from one domain to another, should prick our awareness, should be consciously "as if" and still be understood (Brown, 1976). Within the metaphoric context, metonymy and synecdoche are secondary forms which further specify the differences between elements said to compose the whole (metonymy) or to expand the similarities within the context (synecdoche). In the latter case, the part, by extension, becomes increasingly encompassing, integrative, and consuming.

Synecdoche, or seeing the part for the whole, in a sense, involves expanding a partial indication of the whole into the whole — "red sails in the sunset" for a boat. One may thus take a single example and use it as a microcosm of a larger process. It works through the principle of the expansion of meaning from part to a larger whole about which the reader is meant to be concerned.

Metonymy, on the other hand, takes a whole and reduces it to constitutive parts. It works through the mechanism of reduction, with the adduced parts being linked in some fashion with some explicated force which causes their identified patterning. Both metaphoric variations, synecdoche and metonymy, proceed on the assumption of an established context of a known whole or distinction.

Irony, the fourth of the master tropes, is an explanation in terms of difference rather than the posited similarity of metaphor (Burke, 1962: 503–517). Irony is a “linguistic strategy” in which what appears to be the case is contraposed to some “more real” explanation or dynamic. Irony sanctions opposition to literalism, the acceptance of appearance, or makes a distinction within it, qualifies, converts, or transforms the apparent (White, 1978: 73).

Metonymy is the most common trope employed by social scientists when approaching organizational analysis. Metonymy takes the whole (an organization) to be indicated by its parts (e.g., the number of levels in an organization, the size of the body of rules governing procedures, the rates of mobility between and within organizational slots). The whole is thus represented by the parts; the essential features of a whole are reduced to indices. This whole is not itself sketched, but this “incorporeal” or intangible idea is converted into a visible, corporeal, or tangible “thing” (Burke, 1962: 506). Relationships between the indices or variables form the infrastructure of the thing, or the processes and functions. Complex cognitive, behavioral, and emotive matters are reduced to measurable spatial and temporal relationships. Metonymy dominates in an analysis when organizations are seen as composed of a series of relations represented by path coefficients that are argued to be the cause of organizational behavior (actions in uncertain markets, attempts to control resources, or other bridging metaphors of explanation for the statistical series). Numerical analysis is always indexical or standing for something in series.

The organic concept of organizations is a synecdoche. The idea is that the organization is an organic part transacting across boundaries with a larger environment to which it is closely linked with evolution. The organic metaphor, developed by Terreberry (1968), links the differentiation and growth of organizational structure to responses and adaptation of the organization to the environment. The organization is taken as a synecdoche for all living and adapting units. The apparent distinctiveness of organization behavior is resolved by seeing it/them as mere cases of general principles of evolution, adaptation, and/or natural laws.

Irony is to some extent used by all social sciences, since all trade on debunking, conversion, transformation, and making the apparent no longer apparent. The rational system view of organizations (Gouldner, 1959) trades on irony in that it sees the organization as maintaining a degree of rational control over its environment by the specification of determinant rules, procedures, and goals. Organization stands in contrast to its environment: it represents a rational island in the midst of irrational counterforces.

Each of the four master tropes organized my fieldwork (and my analyses), although my understanding at the time of the precise mechanisms they involved was limited.

## FIELDWORK<sup>2</sup> AND THE TROPES

The modes of discourse discussed selectively conceal and reveal aspects of the social world. Alterations in style, by framing the world, also may throw putative features of it

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The material cited here comes from two studies. The first was undertaken by Manning as a visiting fellow at NILECJ/LEAA during 1974–1975 in two municipal police drug law enforcement units in the southeastern United States; one in a large metropolitan police department of over 4,000 officers, and one in a suburban (county) unit of over 500 officers. The units were composed, respectively, of more than 50 and under 20 officers (the number fluctuated). The second, a study of six municipal units, was carried out by Jay R. Williams, principal investigator, Lawrence John Redlinger, and Manning with a grant from NILECJ to the Research Triangle Institute during 1976–1977. In each site, we gathered field observations, interviews, records, forms, and participated in the round of work. Our focus in the field work was upon *key events* such as raids, surveillances, interrogations, group meetings, and arrest-and-charge situations. We also studied police-prosecutor relations through interviews with prosecutors. Details of the first study are found in Manning (forthcoming a) and of the second in Williams, Redlinger, and Manning (1979).

into contrast or even contradiction. Variations in tropes produce alterations in readings and show the relativism of each. When inspecting field research and the analysis of field data, one should bear in mind the analogs between literary and social criticism; both assume and play upon the root metaphor that language, or the structure of language, provides the structure of the social world. Language is the model for all human communication.<sup>3</sup>

In the organizational analyses undertaken by myself and colleagues, different modes of discourse were employed singularly or in combination during the course of the field research and in different sections of subsequent publications. It should be noted that the use of these tropes was not sequential in the sense that one followed the other, or that any is the preferred or correct one. Furthermore, I do not believe that any one of them is "higher," more abstract, or illuminating than the others. It is clear in retrospect that they did not emerge one after the other; but rather they achieved degrees of salience from time to time over the course of the research. Unlike White (1978), I do not argue that there is a hierarchy of tropes — from the most naive approach in metaphor in general, through metonymy, synecdoche, and, finally, irony — with each revealing more than the other.

On the other hand, ironic analysis is inevitable whenever one approaches any subject, sees it within another perspective, turns it over, "takes it apart," compares, and contrasts it. Irony is the substantial metaphor of social research (Burke, 1962, 1965; Bruyn, 1966; Gusfield, 1976).

### Metaphor: The Master Detective

The general metaphor "master detective," as applied to drug policing, was derived from the study of policing and, more specifically, detective work. In detective work, the conventional metaphor is one of the "super investigator" who encounters a crime, seeks clues, persons (witnesses, suspects, informants), motives, opportunities, weapons and other physical evidence, assembles the facts, correctly aduces a conclusion, and names a villain.<sup>4</sup> This master detective metaphor provides a lens through which drug policing can be viewed. Using this metaphor, a comparative table was developed to guide analysis of two organizations. With it, I intended to display a comparison of the sources, types, and numbers of cases investigated and cleared, and to identify the means by which they were closed. It was assumed, following the master detective metaphor, that the concept of and definition of a "case" were nonproblematic, that the sources of cases were limited and well controlled by administrative personnel, and that the procedures, means of investigation, forms of resolution, and clearance were standardized. Successful comparative analysis was predicated on these assumptions. What was envisioned was an organizationally-controlled investigative process. In time, however, a drug investigator-centered model was found to more accurately describe the process of enforcement (Manning, forthcoming a).

In one sense, of course, the organization creates the drug investigator-centered model of drug policing shown in Table

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This is a basic tenet of structuralism in its several forms. See the useful summaries of Jameson, 1972; Scholes, 1974; Culler, 1975; Leach, 1976; Hawkins, 1977; Pettit, 1977.

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This Holmesian model has since been shown to be a very partial description of actual detective work by Greenwood, Chaiken, and Petersilia (1977).

Table 1

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**Features of Narcotics Enforcement and Modes of Organizational Control**


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**Narcotics Crimes in General**


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1. Crimes are private transactions, usually with no complaints.
  2. Agents are often distant from crime; must "make crime happen."
  3. Agents do not rely wholly on voluntary information, but must obtain it through informants. Conditions for "working off" cases are not put in writing a priori nor is approval required before a "deal" is made between an investigator and an informant.
  4. Selection of targets is discretionary and cases are infinitely expandable.
  5. Calls to narcotics units are not tape recorded (i.e., can not be independently monitored).
  6. Sergeants are usually not aware of the precise number of informants or cases of an individual officer.
  7. Relationships between time, effort, money, and arrests are unknown; activity sheets are only a partial record of time and effort.
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**Investigator-Centered\***

1. No initial information can be verified independently. Nothing in writing is required upon receipt of information.
2. Those few cases that are assigned are considered special assignments.
3. No cases are officially "opened" or "closed."
4. Number, type, promise, and estimated "pay-off" of cases are known almost exclusively by an officer or investigating officers.
5. Arrests, charges, seizures, served search warrants, and buys indicate officers' activities only *after the fact*.
6. No clearance rate can be calculated since: Crimes are not independently investigated after an allegation. Cases are in effect self-initiated, self-defined, and self-closed.
7. Informants are known only by investigators, not evaluated by supervisors, and may not be placed in official files nor given an official number.

**Organization-Centered**

1. Some clues are recorded on special investigative forms.
  2. Cases are routinely assigned.
  3. Assigned cases must be closed within a specified time.
  4. Frequent checks are made on the number, type, and promise of cases (e.g., squad or section meetings).
  5. Supervisors must give prior approval of buys and raids.
  6. Partial clearance rate can be calculated for assigned cases.
  7. Use of informants requires sergeant's approval, and a sergeant must meet informants. Performance of informants is evaluated and a central file is kept with records of payments and performance.
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\*Some squads may vary from this model, e.g., diversion, schools or squads on special "big case" assignments.

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1 as much as it creates the organizational-centered model. In both, the case stands for the organization. The way in which the case is defined is the basis of the distinction within the metaphor. The concept of case took on different meanings in different contexts.

### Synecdoche: The Case

Fieldwork in the first of the two sites revealed that this metaphor was only a partial truth for drug policing. The establishment of the existence or potential existence of a crime was the job of the drug investigator. In some sense, officers had to "make crime happen." They did not respond to or react to previously defined and investigated events as did detectives. Cases were not funneled or channeled to drug investigators in routinized fashion, unlike detective work where cases are assigned to investigators by their supervisors. Case materials were not kept in formal, shared, rationalized formats and stored in a central location. Instead, they were kept by individual officers in their desks or "heads," until and unless they personally decided to close them. In that instance, a case would be simultaneously opened or closed. Since emphasis was placed more on arrests than on solving cases, the "master detective" was much less the dominant role model than was the officer who was shrewd, fast-operating, and clever at constructing

the scenes in which crimes might be seen, verified, or created. The synecdoche "case" for investigation was not an adequate expansion of the metaphor.

Conversely, the "case" or "detective" metaphor was a penetrating tool insofar as it dramatized the importance of informants as a means of gathering clues, of careful interviewing and of suspicious trust. The partial truth of the metaphor was revealed through interviewing key informants, the flavor of which can be suggested by a paraphrase from an early interview. When I asked an officer how he attained his cases he cautioned me that I should not make his comments "too public." He explained that cases came mainly from informants who had been charged with crimes and were willing to "work" or to "make cases." Making cases meant making buys from dealers to enable the police to make a sales case, identifying dealers from whom officers might make buys (with an introduction made by the informant), or giving information which might lead to an arrest. These informants generally were paid, or they worked off their "beefs" (arrests) under the control of an officer. Other sources of cases were from paid informants, anonymous citizens who call, other agencies, and patrol officers. Many of these leads were not reviewed or controlled by supervisors. Officers made virtually all the significant decisions about their cases. In effect, the diversity of the leads, the control of the officer over the information received, the weak controls of supervisors over informants, and the paying of informants meant that, in most instances, the officer along with the informants, developed, worked, and closed cases independently.

"Working" informants is exciting and central to the everyday work of the units. It is a "key event"; in Burke's terms, it is one of a class of events that provided synecdocheal data or served as a source of "representative anecdotes." These were events on which the success or failure of the unit was believed to rest: search warrant raids; surveillance, especially moving surveillance of drug dealers; interrogation and debriefing of informants and recently arrested persons; and supervised controlled buys made by informants from dealers (the hope was to make the buys the basis for obtaining and serving a search warrant or making an arrest for drug sales). These were, in short, the synecdocheal events by which the entire organization was characterized by participants. Two lines of analysis were derived from these synecdocheal relations. The first involved locating the central features of the interactions between "narcs" and "informants" and to see those, in turn, as characteristic or central features of narcotics police work (as opposed to police work in general and to other sorts of specialized policing). Knowledge of this segment of police work became a basis for a second analysis, an investigation of the bases of the systematic differentiation of narcotic policing from other forms of policing.

### Metonymy: Arrest Data

From this material, it was clear that there might be a number of ways of "getting cases," and that these, in turn, might be a function of the agent's perspective. Administra-

tive personnel, when interviewed concerning the overall aim of drug enforcement would use a form of metonymy by referring, for example, to objectives, goals, and indicators of success. The perspective differed in an important way. The metonymic arrest data that was provided did not capture the officers' perspective since the nature of the object being called a case could not be reduced. Cases were constituted from different facts and the causal logic linking cases to outcomes was not that of the intelligent officer solving obscure cases in the Holmesian fashion.

The statements of goals provided by administrators are reductions or indices of the process of drug control. Enforcing drug laws, at least theoretically, is based on knowledge of the number of users, the size of their habits, the types of drugs they use, the distribution of the users and use levels across the ecological complex of the jurisdiction, the price, the market structure for each of the drugs at hand, the licit versus illicit sources of the drug, trends and levels of use, variations in the above "variables," and the overall causal structure that links them. Administrators did not possess such theoretic knowledge. When such processes and complexes can be transformed into metonymic indices, a model of these metonymic relations could be constructed (e.g., Preble and Casey, 1969; Wilson and Wheat, 1975; DuPont, 1978). Correlations between these figures have been found, and detailed and precise models had been developed by Silverman, Spruill, and Levine (1974), Levin, Roberts, and Hirsch (1975), and Moore (1977). In these models, indicators of larger processes were shrunken into microformats and modeled using crime statistics, seizure data, number of warrants served and the like. The construction of the drug problem in this fashion is an *equation* of two phenomena. "Drug use" is collapsed into "crime," "crime" is collapsed into the statistics and rates for drug arrests, and changes in drug arrest rates are taken to be indicators of variation in the magnitude of the drug problem. The "drug problem" is itself a synecdoche for all crime, while also standing in metonymic relationship to "drug use." When one works back and forth across the equation, parallels and differences can be made salient. Is drug use (e.g., marijuana, cough syrup, valium) a crime representative of all crimes? Of what part of what whole is it a reduction?

### **Irony: The Rational Organizational Model**

Research was governed overall by the strategy called by Burke (1962: 69-163) "perspective by incongruity," or sensitivity to indications of basic irony. Two sorts of irony are built into this perspective on drug enforcement. The first irony is derived from systematically contrasting what is viewed as the morally proper and necessary enterprise of policing, to the structurally similar enterprise, the "drug business," which is viewed as immoral, improper, and certainly illegal. We found this a useful irony. The drug world and the police world were treated analogously. They were displayed as mirror-images of each other (see Table 2). The irony results from identifying parallel structures in two social worlds, one moral, the other immoral. Ironically, undercover narcs do not look like police officers: they keep strange hours, hang out with "bad guys," can drink, frequent bars,

Table 2

**Analogies Between the Dealing-Using System and the Enforcement System**

Narcotics-Dealing Organizations	Narcotics-Enforcement Organizations
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pressures for sales and production.</li> <li>2. Concern for security and secrecy.</li> <li>3. Dealings based on personal relationships; trust central to the work.</li> <li>4. Entrepreneurial model of success.</li> <li>5. Feudal loyalty characteristic of organizational relationships; punitive mode of coercion prevails.</li> <li>6. Pyramidal-like structure of operation: low, flat hierarchy with largest number of actors on the bottom of the organization being exposed to the greatest risks.</li> <li>7. Distrust, lying, misrepresentation, and duplicity are dominant modes of interpersonal relations.</li> <li>8. Prices based on relationship to buyer; negotiated and not fixed.</li> <li>9. Violence, envy, ambivalence, and revenge are dominant emotional themes.</li> <li>10. Street "rip-offs" of money and dope are common; law does not provide protection for such losses by dealers.</li> <li>11. Work demands are sporadic and episodic; often nocturnal. Work is overdemanding and the clientele must be controlled by manipulation.</li> <li>12. Clientele can be "turned" to be used by the "enemy." Can not be trusted (yet must be trusted); is viewed as tricky and deceitful, as are agents of control.</li> <li>13. Prestige comes from associates, quality of one's clientele, dope, amounts dealt, style of life, and knowledge of drug scene.</li> <li>14. Routines and the rationalization of practices are a basis for success.</li> <li>15. Both caution and risk taking are essential to success.</li> <li>16. Generally a young man's work, dominated by a young man's style of life and interests, on and off the job.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pressures for sales, production of cases, search warrants, and arrests.</li> <li>2. Concern for security and secrecy.</li> <li>3. Dealings based on personal relationships; trust central to the work.</li> <li>4. Entrepreneurial model of success.</li> <li>5. Feudal loyalty characteristic of organizational relationships; punitive mode of coercion prevails.</li> <li>6. Pyramidal-like structure (varies by unit): low, flat hierarchy with the largest number of actors on the bottom being exposed to the greatest risks.</li> <li>7. Trust/distrust, lying, misrepresentation, and duplicity are dominant personal modes. Formalization of relations across organizational segments.</li> <li>8. Payment based on relationship to informant and case; prices somewhat negotiated, not fixed, but constrained by both the market and organizational policy as interpreted by the sergeants.</li> <li>9. Violence, inter and intraorganizational envy, ambivalence, and revenge are dominant themes.</li> <li>10. Street "rip-offs" of money happen frequently; law is a powerful force protecting narcs and sanctioning their revenge-retaliatory actions.</li> <li>11. Work demands are sporadic and episodic; often nocturnal. Work is overdemanding and the clientele must be controlled by manipulation.</li> <li>12. Clientele can be "turned" to be used by the "enemy." Can not be trusted (yet must be trusted); is viewed as tricky and deceitful, as are agents of control.</li> <li>13. Prestige comes from targets, quality of one's past arrests and seizures, and knowledge of the drug scene.</li> <li>14. Routines and the rationalization of practices are a basis for success.</li> <li>15. Both caution and risk taking are essential to success.</li> <li>16. Generally a young man's work, dominated by a young man's style of life and interests, on and off duty.</li> </ol>

dress like criminals while on duty; are paid on a different basis; and attempt to become like the persons from whom they were meant to be different. By creating this set of comparable dimensions, the relativity of the norms, values, roles, motivations, and rules is dramatized. What ultimately distinguishes one from the other, once they are seen as similar on one level, different on another?

The second sort of irony is produced by a close examination of the rational model of organizational control. This model is one of the most common constitutions of organization found in the literature. From this model were derived notions about how the organization shaped cases, how they were obtained, how they were "worked," what was done to resolve them, how they were supervised and monitored from time to time, what the appropriate costs, techniques, and informants used were, and what the necessary training was. The source of my original view (or metaphor) is noted on the organizational-centered side (left) of Table 1 while the dominant pattern in the second organization (and in others later studied) is shown in the right column. The organizational-centered model was used to contrast with the officer-centered model.

Since these models were analytic ideal-types and did not shape all the cases worked in either of the two organizations compared (see Manning, forthcoming a), it was possible to extend the irony further. This was accomplished by contrasting a set of ways in which cases might be obtained with the organizational model by showing how, even when the aim was close organizational control, the impact of the organization of case selection, investigation and closure was minimal; that of the individual agent supreme. In addition to the irony that in neither type is the organization the controlling force guiding agents' actions and their choice of cases, one must consider the metairony that the police in general, and certainly the drug police, have little effect upon crime. Although the degree and type of effect of policing on crime varies, it is of marginal significance. From this master irony, the secondary irony of ineffectual drug control is a logical derivative (Manning, 1977, forthcoming b).

## CONCLUSION

It has been argued that most social science does not take into account the way in which the master tropes shape the writing as well as the gathering of qualitative data. If, for example, the analysis of drug policing had proceeded as if the master detective metaphor were adequate, then, those cases which fit the tropes would have been sought out, followed, detailed, and written up as representative of drug work. This is in fact what the agencies themselves do in selectively publicizing their successful "busts," large raids, enormous seizures, and ingenious infiltration of sinister drug-dealing cabals. Perhaps placing together the two tropes is revealing in a dialectical fashion. It produces irony, which, in turn, touches off new possibilities in troping and new perspectives by incongruity (Burke, 1962). What metaphor is chosen will be modified in the course of field research and a note of irony rings through most such analyses. They contain self-confessional notes, new revelations, misunderstandings, reinterpretations and new sense(s) of the social settings being investigated (see Johnson, 1975; Manning, forthcoming c). Much of the work of this paper is done by examples from field research and the modifications of tropes and relevant data. Converting this material into a written text creates a new set of problems and ambiguities, the discussion of which concludes the paper.

The presentation of an argument in this text is multi-reflective: The text communicates about observations made and interpreted, but it also reflects on itself as a written document which the reader must make sensible.<sup>5</sup> Variations in text or context produce variations in awareness, much as attention shifts in everyday experience. Each sign (something which indicates something else to some observer) — signifier (that which is indicated) combination (e.g., a rose (sign) indicates passion (signifier)), is linked in a context of conventional understanding of the signified relationship. Roses as a signifier are, as Barthes (1972) writes, "empty," but as the product of the signifier-signified relationship, they become a meaningful and powerful sign. The styles of discourse utilized here, the tropes, are symbolic contexts (ironically indicated). The reader is meant to take the discussion

Weick (1977, 1979) utilizes iconic variations to jog thought. Poems and drawings are set next to linear text. Visual-spatial signs "emit iconic messages about their nature through the visual means of typography over and above (or under and beneath) the symbolic messages of their content" (Hawkins, 1977: 136). To write, "this is 'ironic'" is an iconic sign signifying the concept irony (unexpected appearance of a message about the text itself in the text). It also signifies irony in the juxtaposition of facts it refers to in the text. The same iconic work is done by inserting figures to illustrate textual arguments: they provide a counter-point.

framed by the introduction of the term "synecdoche" as an illustration of the working of that trope (at least). However, since it is a context, it can be removed from that context or shifted from one set of rules for context framing to another.<sup>6</sup> The possibility that an instance or example might be seen other than as it is presented generates ambiguity. It can be seen as a metaphor on more than one level.

Patterned ambiguity of context, mode, or text, introduces surprise or awareness even of this possible variation in expository writing. Analogously, metaphoric or similar concepts presented as semantically frozen, that is, locked into a conventionalized semantic space of denotative meaning, can be jarred loose. Some of these concepts, "organization," "organizational," "environment" and the like, as indicated by Bittner in a brilliant and innovative paper (1965), are only frozen contextually. Lemert (1979), in an equally seminal paper, has outlined a promising semiotics of organizations and of organizational analysis. These highly original exercises in textual criticism are portentous. They suggest that concepts become frozen as a result of location. Do concepts in organizational discourse in a sense speak unequivocally because they reside in texts that are conventionally defined as "speaking science"?

It is also worth noting that while much is done in scientific writing to deny the individuality of the writer, to constrain the varieties of worlds possible which might be represented, and in fact to posit the reader as a mere recipient, any text can be viewed as producing the opposite effects. In "readerly" texts of science or of the classics in literature, as Barthes (1974) writes, the nature of social reality is static, given to be taken and reflects a single, hegemonic set of values and interpretations. Such texts heretofore have been the basis of social science. On the other hand, this conception of the text can be contrasted with "writerly" texts where the reader participates and takes an active part in the interpretation of the text. They actively create a sense of the signified through sharing the signifiers, or the text (see, for a useful summary of this argument, Barthes, 1976 and Hawkins, 1977: 106–122). Perhaps because this paper is a text in which the *linear* mode of communication is singularly employed, and where iconic variations are minimized, the transformation between codes does not occupy us much. The process may well be a worthy preoccupation. Writing contains two kinds of signs, Hawkins (1977: 136) reminds us, and

language, which is normally *auditory* in mode, is made *visual* when it is written down or given printed form. To the auditory sign's commitment to *time* as a structuring agent is therefore added (in one sense, the process is also one of reduction) to the visual sign's commitment to *space*. Thus writing imposes on language a linearity and a sequentiality and a physical existence in space which speech does not have.

The text is made an object of consideration, both as a production and representation, and as a physical entity with spatial reality.

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This process is elaborated in complex and elegant detail by Goffman in *Frame Analysis*, 1974; see also Derrida, 1976.

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