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Metaphors that inspire 'researching *with* people':
UK farming, countrysides and diverse stakeholder contexts

David McClintock

*A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the Systems Department, The Open University, United Kingdom*

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Abstract

An awareness of *metaphors* offers exciting possibilities for research. Metaphors can be seen as central to our understandings and as a way to be able to *appreciate* different understandings. In contexts characterised by many actors and different activities, such as in agriculture, metaphors provide a way of dealing with this diversity.

Metaphors also enhance attempts to be self-reflective and responsible in research. Researching *with* people explicitly recognises the roles assumed by the researcher as well as co-researchers. Researching *with* people removes a divide between *doing* and *using* research, and focuses on how to create a space where different understandings can emerge.

The context for this research is *how future countrysides in the UK can come about*. Farming, environmental and social issues are all included in this context, although farming is taken as a base. The main 'co-researchers' were several farming families and members of The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG).

In the thesis, a framework is developed for recognising, bringing forth and exploring metaphors. Ways of using metaphors explicitly in research are developed by considering how metaphors provide: a way to understand our understandings, as well as the way language is used; a way to reflect on, and structure research; a way to understand the research context and to appreciate a diversity of understandings; and a way to create space for understandings to emerge. An approach is proposed that can inform research in diverse stakeholder contexts, in a wide range of fields, based on an awareness of metaphors.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Ray Ison for giving me the confidence and freedom to explore metaphors and research, and Rosalind Armson for making writing less onerous. Both Ray and Rosalind have supported me in ways that would fill the thesis if listed here. Thank you, both, as my supervisors and friends.

I wish to thank the 'co-researchers' who made this thesis possible. I appreciated their hospitality and the times that we spent together. I have many fond memories of my fieldwork. In FWAG, I would especially like to thank Richard Knight and John Terry.

I wish to acknowledge the many individuals that have contributed, such as Stephany Kersten, Christine Blackmore, Tony Brauer, Linda Ludwin, fellow post-grads, Pat Shah, colleagues in the Systems Dept. and John Monk. There are many others who I can add to this list. Thank you.

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Chapter 1 The thesis question

How can metaphors inspire researching with people?

Metaphors can inspire. In this thesis, I explain how metaphors have inspired my research. I am concerned with what 'research' is trying to do and how it is being conducted. In particular, I am concerned with the 'people' side of research and my own role as a researcher. The phrase 'researching *with* people' acknowledges my desire to include people in this research. Considering metaphors shifts attention to language and interaction: two essential components of researching with people.

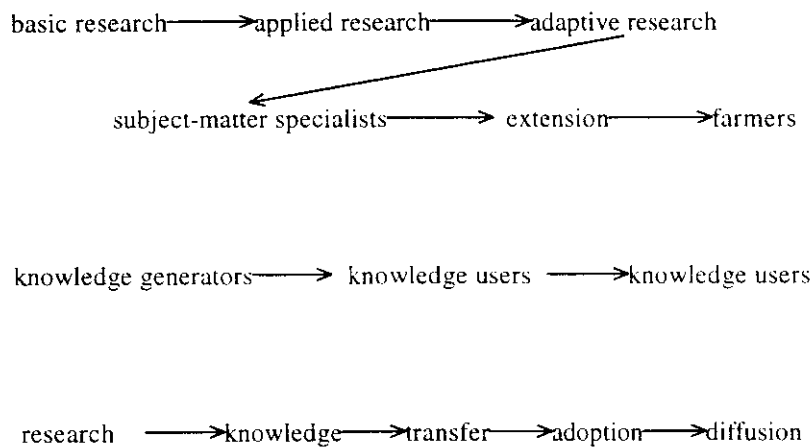
My background is in agriculture and I was raised on a family farm in Australia. I am thus interested in researching with people involved in agriculture. The thesis question arises from my experiences with agricultural research. I outline one experience that provides important background to the thesis question in the next section.

The context for this thesis, *future countrysides*, combines this desire to research with people and an issue that was topical when I arrived in the UK. Farming does not occur in a vacuum, and a focus on countrysides allows people issues as well as 'environmental' issues to be included. My starting assumption was that different countrysides can emerge from different ways of working with people. An explicit focus on 'metaphors' and 'researching *with* people' provoke different ways of working with people.

I have structured the thesis in terms of one central question and my responses to it. Although my background is in agriculture, my responses draw on material from domains such as: Philosophy, Systems, Organisational Studies, Rural Development, Action Research, Linguistics and Family Therapy (to mention a few). The thesis may thus be of interest to a wide audience of people also concerned with metaphors and ways of conducting research.

1.1 Background to the question

A lot of people, world-wide, have expressed concern with a dominant model in agricultural research called 'transfer of technology' (ToT)¹. Research results, in the form of 'technology', are modelled as flowing from researchers to farmers. That is, researchers generate the technology and the farmers implement it. Three common versions of this model are presented in Figure 1.1. A ToT model is quite often associated with a second model, Diffusion of Innovations (DoI), which maps differences in the rates of adoption of the technology between the recipient farmers (see Kersten 1995).



source: Kersten (1995: 22)

Figure 1.1 Three versions of the Transfer-of-Technology (ToT) model

My concern with the ToT model was sparked through involvement with a research project in Australia. The CARR project, 'Community Approaches to Rangelands Research', was set up to investigate why farmers were not implementing research results. Under a ToT approach, non-implementation is considered to be caused by 'barriers to adoption'. The approach in the CARR

¹ see reviews by Chambers and Ghildyal (1985); Röling (1990); Russell and Ison (1993); and Kersten (1995).

project was instead to 'tap into' the potential for farmers to undertake research as part of a 'community of co-researchers'. The researcher too, becomes a fundamental *part* of the research, as do the farmers for whom the research is intended. The justifications for this approach, which arise from questioning the assumptions implicit in ToT about 'knowledge', 'communication', and the position of the researcher, are outlined further in Russell and Ison (1993); Ison (1993); and CARR (1993a,b).

What I took out of the CARR project were concerns for what research is trying to do and an interest in epistemology. Important issues for me were:

- how can research acknowledge the position of the researcher?;
- who is involved in research?;
- what types of research are appropriate in agricultural research?; and
- does there have to be a separation between doing and using research?

'Researching *with* people' appealed to me, although there were questions about how it could be done as, in agriculture, people are very diverse and geographically spread out. This makes agricultural research intrinsically concerned with 'diverse stakeholder contexts'. Researching *with* people also linked closely with the calls for 'participation' coming from Rural Development in Third World countries.

I have not tried to set up ToT as a 'straw man' in order to justify an alternative approach². I also do not want to enter into a discussion about its pros and cons. That has already been done more than adequately (see Kersten 1995). Instead, I have outlined ToT and the CARR project to provide some background for why I consider the thesis question to be important, and how I became interested in different ways of conducting research.

One other piece of background to the question is needed, and that is to do with how I became interested in metaphors. My first exposure to metaphors was a

² A straw man is an expression from philosophy, where an opponent's arguments is set up in ridiculous terms so that it can be easily critiqued and knocked down. Making a straw man could fit in with Hegel's mechanism of proposing a thesis, then an antithesis, and out of which a synthesis could emerge. The thesis presented would be ToT and my 'metaphors' approach 'with people' the antithesis. Somebody would be left to make up the synthesis, or perhaps this will emerge out of this particular account. As I explain later, I am more interested in writing in a way which allows the conversation to continue, an endeavour which a straw man can detract from. An 'as-if' formulation (syllogism) can avoid making straw-men.

course on the philosophy of Design, at the University of Sydney. The lecturers concerned presented different approaches to design "as metaphors". I was also initially inspired by Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Metaphors We Live By. This book presented an account of metaphors as *everyday*, *pervasive*, and *important*. Other accounts of metaphor, such as Gareth Morgan's (1986) Images of Organization, have deepened this inspiration. A significant time in my research came when I could relate this inspiration to researching with people. Metaphors have such a central place in this thesis that I do not want to preempt my story too much here. In effect, this whole thesis is a testimony to the implications of acknowledging metaphors as being a central and everyday part of what I do.

1.2 The context for this thesis question: *future countrysides in the UK*

I chose *future countrysides*, or more precisely *how future countrysides can come about*, as an appropriate context for this thesis research. The context represents a negotiation between my interests³, the aims of the research (to explore metaphors and researching with people) and the interests of potential collaborators. Researching with people in such a context is intrinsically difficult. In 'diverse stakeholder contexts' there are many people who 'have a stake' in any decisions and actions⁴. Using metaphors with diverse stakeholders is an unexplored area that this thesis aims to illuminate. This section outlines why I chose future countrysides, and who these collaborators were.

1.2.1 FUTURE COUNTRYSIDES IN THE UK

Agricultural research is concerned principally with farming, but this farming does not occur in a vacuum. *Countryside*s represents an opportunity to broaden the scope of agricultural research in the UK by including 'environmental' and nature conservation issues. Quite often, farming is cast in an oppositional role to conservation, and 'the countryside' becomes an area of conflicts (see for example Lowe *et al.* 1986). These conflicts are fuelled by concerns that countrysides are changing and under threat, and legislation such as "The 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act" indicates that *countryside*s are of sufficient

³ and the interests of the main supervisor and research community concerned with ToT approaches.

⁴ I use 'diverse stakeholder contexts' to refer to 'loosely connected networks of people that have a concern for a particular issue, or problem situation'. A closely related expression is 'multi-actor' contexts.

concern to enough people to warrant legislation. Legislation is not the only way this concern has been expressed: there is a broad literature on countrysides, and there is also a Government agency in England, The Countryside Commission, set up specifically to deal with countryside issues.

Countrysides also broadens the scope of agricultural research by including 'multiple stakeholders' and people other than farmers. Two different arguments support including 'people' issues: countrysides are a resource for many people and many activities, not just farming (as typified by Shoard 1980), or countrysides are a human construct and hence people need to be included. With the latter argument, many different understandings are possible. I use the term *countrysides* in a plural form throughout the thesis in order to acknowledge "multiple countrysides" and a diversity of understandings about what might be called "the countryside".

An orientation to *future countrysides* allows for the possibility of different constructs than 'present practice'. Constructs can include processes of *how* these future countrysides might be realised, come about or emerge⁵. One assumption behind this orientation is that different ways of working with people can trigger different sorts of understandings and hence different countrysides. A second assumption is that background perspectives are more likely to be explicit in considering 'what may be' rather than 'what is perceived to be'. A third assumption is that this orientation creates opportunities for people to be *involved* in future countrysides, by exploring their particular constructs and perspectives. If people feel excluded from current constructions of countrysides, then 'what could be' might enhance involvement in future countrysides⁶.

Future countrysides, then, can be seen as a relevant context for researching *with* people, and exploring diverse understandings.

One boundary to the research context is that farming is taken as a base to explore future countrysides. The exploration does not have to be confined to farming, but it is a significant starting point as about 77% of the land area in the United Kingdom is farmed (Central Statistics Office 1996: 207). Any

⁵ One 'co-researcher' talked of 'future countrysides' as "*systems through which change [in the countryside] can be initiated*" [a1, see 3.2 for an explanation of what 'a1' means].

⁶ McClintock and Ison (1994a) call this involvement 'response-ability' where people have space to explore and share their constructs. Choosing future states can also be called "design" (see Ison 1993).

changes in farming practices can have a large effect on countrysides, and some commentators do indeed attribute damage to 'the countryside' to changes in agriculture. There are many kinds of farming⁷ included in this land area, but 'arable' cropping and livestock-related industries provide a convenient focus. Forestry is excluded, except where it is a viable component of a working farm. A farming base suggests that "ordinary" countrysides are highlighted, rather than National Parks and specialist conservation zones.

A second boundary is provided by the location(s) of the study. Figure 1.2 shows the main research areas in which this author had contact with people involved in countrysides. All these locations are in South England: which is described as "Lowland England" by Potter (1986). The map shows counties in England, as people involved in this research were predominantly approached through a county-based organisation called The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) (see section 1.3.2). Three significant sites are marked. The first is The Open University at Milton Keynes, where I was based. The second is The National Agricultural Centre in Warwickshire, where FWAG and the Royal Agricultural Show are based. The third site is St. Neots, a town in Cambridgeshire. Farming families who participated in the 'metaphor workshops' were based in close proximity to this town.

A third boundary arises from the choice of terminology. There are many related concepts to countrysides both in everyday use and in the literature⁸, such as: *landscapes*, *rural*, and *the natural environment*. Each of these concepts has different connotations. For example, choosing *countrysides* emphasises farming and other activities, but perhaps conceals some of the 'visual' components attributed to *landscapes*. *Rural* conceals high population densities such as the villages and towns in the UK. *Nature* and *the natural environment* casts humans as 'external agents', and leads to 'wilderness' connotations: "*the environment was construed by some to be a purely visual facet of life. This made it difficult for them to relate to some of the more practical links... and connections to employment, housing, transport, tourism...*" (BDOR 1991: 25). Consulting all of the literature on these alternative notions remains outside the scope of the present study.

⁷ Agriculture and farming are used interchangeably. 'Farmings', as with Seddon (1989), might be more consistent to take into account the diversity in farming.

⁸ Terms and related concepts will be used as the authors have, but under the banner of countrysides.

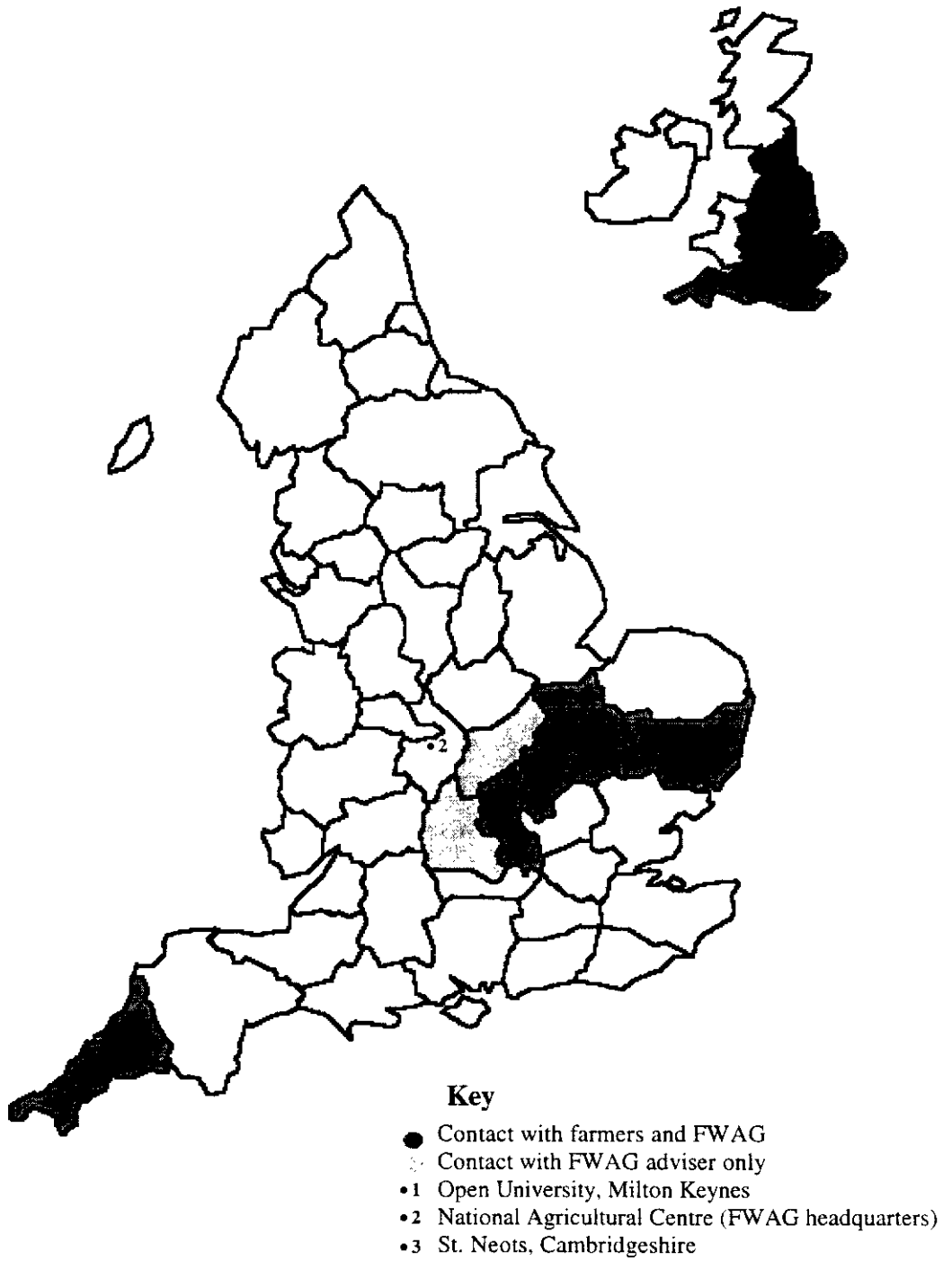


Figure 1.2 The main research areas

1.2.2 PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THIS RESEARCH: FARMING FAMILIES AND THE FARMING AND WILDLIFE ADVISORY GROUP (FWAG)

As farming is taken as a starting point to explore future countrysides, then suitable 'co-researchers' include those people directly involved in farming. Research with 'farmers' has generally focused on 'a male farmer', and it is fair to say that farming has traditionally been male-oriented (see section 6.2.7). At the least, this orientation trivialises the perspectives of women. 'Farming families' is used here instead of the label 'farmer', to encompass men, women, parents, and children: all can be involved in the day-to-day activities on a farm, or in making decisions which effect the farming^{9,10}. All can have different perspectives, that is, use different metaphors, of how future countrysides can come about.

Researching with farming families has the positive effect of including women and family members. However, another group largely excluded by agricultural research is that of farm workers. 'Farming families' does not adequately involve these people. A second short-coming of the label is that it promotes family farms and plays down 'company' farms. The exclusion of company farm managers (whether male, female, or a board) and farm workers is a limitation (or a boundary) of this research.

Farming families with an explicit interest in countrysides issues provided a starting point to consider countrysides issues. In this way, farming families were not invited on the basis of the type or the size of enterprise, nor because of their age. An explicit interest in countrysides might indicate a willingness to be involved in this sort of research project. Russell and Ison (1993) call this willingness "enthusiasm", and they propose that action will occur *only* if people are enthusiastic. Enthusiasm can be expressed in many ways, but involvement with a farming and conservation organisation (FWAG) was an initial indicator of an interest in countrysides issues.

The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) emerged as a potential partner from discussions following the *"What price the countryside?"*

⁹ When this author used the word 'farmer' in participant-observation phases, it was usually interpreted as 'male farmer'. This observation provided an incentive to change the description to 'farming family'.

¹⁰ A single or divorced person is not excluded by reference to a family.

conference in Ludlow, Shropshire (21/2/94)¹¹. The topic, *future countrysides*, was vague at that stage apart from an interest in working with 'farmers'. I had only just arrived in England, and FWAG provided access to a network of conversations simply not available to a foreign student. FWAG was also able to offer an institutional perspective on the countrysides, which contrasts with farming families as diverse stakeholders.

FWAG is a charitable organisation, with an expressed mission of uniting farming and conservation. Its network of conversations included farmers, conservationists and others involved in countrysides issues. FWAG sets itself apart from other farming organisations by emphasising conservation, and sets itself apart from conservation organisations by working from a farming base. FWAG recognise the farm, rather than the site or habitat, as a basic unit for conservation, and that the way people farm has an effect on the environment. FWAG promotes an integration between economically viable farming with responsible means of production, referred to as 'environmentally responsible farming'.

FWAG is presented as "*the best available vehicle for demonstrating the capacity for farmers and conservationists to work in harmony and as a means by which farmers themselves might be encouraged to adopt conservation practices in their farming*" (Cox *et al.* 1990: 2). Blunden and Curry (1988: 180) outline two roles for FWAG: to stimulate a social ethic among farmers and landowners, and to defend the autonomy of farmers from statutory controls (that is, working by cooperation). FWAG does not have any executive or statutory powers.

FWAG's main activities are through the network of county groups, and in particular, by employing a number of Farm Conservation Advisers (see Cox *et al.* 1990; FWAG leaflets). FWAG currently has 66 advisers in England, Wales and Scotland. These advisers provide on-farm advice on the environmental effects of farm operations, wildlife conservation, habitat creation and management, and including information about sources of grant aid. Most of the initial contact with FWAG was through these advisers. Other members of county groups are volunteers, and nation-wide there are over 1000 volunteers. Around one half of FWAG's funding and support currently comes from

¹¹ Initial discussions were with one individual within FWAG, rather than with FWAG as an organisation.

agencies such as the Countryside Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF).

1.3 Responses to the thesis question

I have five responses to the thesis question: how can metaphors inspire researching with people? They are:

- metaphors provide both a way to understand our understandings, and how language is used
- metaphors provide a way to reflect on research itself
- metaphors provide a way to understand the research context and to appreciate a diversity of understandings
- metaphors provide ways of creating space for understandings to emerge
- metaphors inspired an approach that can inform research in diverse stakeholder contexts

An awareness of metaphors, and how they contribute to understandings and language, is an essential component of the first response. I start this response with a claim that metaphors are central to our ways of understanding. A link between metaphors and understandings is important, as it suggests that different understandings can emerge from considering different metaphors.

Also as part of the first response, I consider different theories of how metaphors work, and how we can agree that a metaphor is 'a metaphor'. I claim that metaphors are distinguished, rather than exist independently of distinction.

Linking metaphors with understandings provides a way to consider the other four responses to this question. If many metaphors can be used to describe a concept or activity, then many metaphors can be used to describe 'research' itself. This gives a powerful way of addressing one of my main concerns, that of 'what is it that research is trying to do?'. Metaphors provide a valuable way to reflect on research. I could then choose metaphors of research that were consistent with my desire to research *with* people. Researcher roles can also be

defined in terms of these metaphors, as can the role of 'co-researchers': the people involved in research.

Examining metaphors of research acts as a prelude to considering the *use* of metaphors in research. The third response outlines one use of metaphors: in providing a way to understand the context for the research. Different metaphors indicate different understandings of the context. Bringing forth metaphors is a way of explaining, appreciating and creating a diversity of understandings about a context, as a researcher can avoid attributing only one or a few ways of looking at a context. That is, metaphors provide a tool for *listening* to different understandings. Methods of participant-observation, interviewing and workshops were used to bring forth metaphors in this research. Metaphors are presented that relate to countrysides, farming and FWAG's ways of working. The first two, countrysides and farming, are diverse stakeholder contexts, whereas metaphors of FWAG relate to an institutional context.

Bringing forth metaphors allows these understandings to be analysed by a researcher. Metaphors have entailments, or implications, for seeing countrysides in a certain way. I propose a framework by which to analyse the entailments of individual metaphors, which considers what aspects are *revealed* and what aspects are *concealed*. Metaphors can also be juxtaposed and compared. Analysing individual metaphors also allows judgements to be made as to whether the metaphors are 'appropriate', that is, whether they can give rise to new understandings, or whether alternative metaphors can be described.

The fourth response develops the idea that metaphors can be used as part of a research inquiry. In particular, I look at using metaphors to provide a space in which to reflect on present understandings, and to contemplate new understandings. A link between metaphors, understanding and dialogue provides a way to create this space. The reference to 'dialogue' builds on Kersten's (1995) work on whether understandings could emerge through dialogue. Two metaphor workshops tested whether metaphors could facilitate dialogue. In contrast to a researcher understanding a particular context, co-researchers can bring forth and analyse their metaphors as a joint activity. Appropriate and alternative metaphors can also be jointly discussed, and ways of moving between metaphors can be considered.

With the previous four responses, I am then in a position to propose an approach for using metaphors in diverse stakeholder contexts. This constitutes

the fifth response to the thesis question. This approach emerged from the PhD research, and it has not been 'tested' per se. I discuss some of the considerations around using such an approach, and also raise some theoretical issues relating to dominant and reified metaphors. Reified metaphors can act to inhibit a process of moving between metaphors.

This PhD thesis represents an elaboration on these five responses, and the thesis is structured according to these responses.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

One advantage of structuring a thesis in accordance to the responses to a central question, is to provide coherence and one clear story. At every point in the thesis, I try to elaborate on a response that relates to this central question. The remaining chapters start with the part of the question I am responding to, and its general significance. At the end of the chapter I present my reflections, and what issues were raised by the discussion in the chapter. The reflections are part of my attempt to write in a manner that is consistent with the aims of my research.

Chapter 2 elaborates on the first response to the thesis question, and is concerned mainly with the importance of metaphors and some of the 'theory' regarding metaphors. Chapter 3 elaborates on the second response, and looks at metaphors of research consistent with researching with people. The next four chapters elaborate on the third response: how metaphors can provide a way to understand the research context. Chapter 4 sets out the methods used in bringing forth metaphors, the framework for analysis, and how 'appropriate' and alternative metaphors can be considered. Chapter 5 presents the first of the discussions of the research context, under *Images of Countrysides*. Chapter 6 presents the *Images of Farming* brought forth during the research, and Chapter 7 presents the *Images of FWAG*.

The fourth response to the thesis question, how metaphors can be used in researching with people is addressed in the next two chapters. Chapter 8 elaborates on different ways that metaphors have been explicitly and implicitly used, in both organisational and diverse stakeholder contexts. Chapter 9 discusses two workshops designed to test whether metaphors can trigger dialogue, and hence whether space can be created in which co-researchers can bring forth and analyse metaphors. An approach for using metaphors is consolidated and described in Chapter 10, in order to elaborate on the fifth

response. The final chapter, Chapter 11, presents a summary of how metaphors can inspire researching with people. I also outline the main learning points from the research, and what issues and questions arise from the initial thesis question and my responses.

1.5 My internal dialogue: reflections on Chapter 1

I wish to build in a space for reflections into each chapter, as it provides a chance to air points that arise out of my discussions. To a large extent it replaces the copious footnotes that I would otherwise be compelled to make. I consider some theoretical and practical issues that are important, but simply outside the scope of this PhD to attempt to address. Some issues do not illuminate the central question, but are worthwhile avenues for further research. Another reflection is on issues that I am simply not clear on, and hence I use this space as a 'sounding board' for these ideas. In other words, I want to indicate 'an internal dialogue' about some issues raised in the thesis. One expression comes to mind, "*thought is dialogue with the soul*". It is unfortunate that a linear piece of writing does not adequately express this dialogue. Overall, this space is my attempt to be consistent with my desires to be self-reflective. What follows are my reflections on this present chapter.

One very obvious point is that by presenting a question and my responses, I imply that this PhD research is 'a complete process'. I want to emphasise that the thesis question is presentational, and it helps me to focus on **one** central issue. Many questions were possible, and it was very difficult to decide between a focus on metaphors, research methodology, future countrysides and how they can emerge, or even systems and philosophy. The research conducted for this PhD was very exploratory in nature, and covered all of these different foci. The *research* questions varied accordingly. A distinction between a *thesis* question and a *research* question is valid on the grounds that a thesis is an 'after-the event' rationalisation, and this distinction probably arises anyway. However, I am a little uncomfortable at masking all the dead-ends, which surely provide sites for learning anyway?

I had two significant changes in the focus of the research. I initially tried to develop a co-researching group along the lines of an Action Research (AR) project (see Chapter 3). When participants did not express any desire to continue, I found it difficult to justify persevering with this endeavour. If I valued a concept of *invitation*, where people could say no, then trying to continue where it was not wanted was being inconsistent. I could have tried an

AR project in a different area, or with a different focus. However, my attention moved to metaphors. Metaphors were always in the background, and they structured how I engaged in my initial fieldwork. I had also confirmed that metaphors were pervasive, and relevant to future countrysides. I found inspiration in the idea that metaphors could be explicitly used in research, and this thesis documents this inspiration. An alternative thesis question could have solely focused on metaphors, such as "metaphors: theory and practice in research". This could also have been quite exciting. However, the present question reflects the contribution to my research of ideas around researching with people.

The second change in focus was to move away from 'designing' future countrysides. Despite my best efforts to explain otherwise, people usually thought of design as trying to come up with a plan for what future countrysides should look like. 'Design' formed an important part of the initial conceptions of my research (see Ison 1993). I found it easier to talk about "how countrysides might come about", and to treat countrysides as a context for the research rather than a focus.

A lot of other reflections are possible, but there is a chance to air these at other points in the thesis. As a general point, in writing this thesis I want to be consistent with some of Richard Rorty's suggestions. If a worthwhile aim of philosophy is to keep the conversation going rather than to try to resolve issues, then surely the same can be said for 'research'. I also like Rorty's suggestion to 'try thinking of it this way' (see Rorty 1980). My invitation, in what follows, is to try to think of metaphors inspiring research with people.

Chapter 2 Metaphors and understandings: theoretical aspects

*Metaphors provide both a way to **understand** our understandings and how language is used*

In this chapter, I elaborate on the first response to the thesis question by considering some theoretical aspects of metaphors. I start with a claim that metaphors are central to our ways of understanding. I develop a link between metaphors and understanding, by invoking a hermeneutic circle. A link between metaphors and understandings is important, as it suggests that metaphors can be used to explain, appreciate, and create different understandings. I also suggest that a link between metaphors and understandings implies that different understandings can emerge from considering different metaphors. I discuss what metaphors reveal about language, claims that all language is metaphorical, and how *metaphor* can itself be considered a metaphor. Different theories as to how metaphors work are then discussed. I consider relationships between models, paradigms and metaphors, and also how we can agree a metaphor is 'a metaphor'. I claim that metaphors are distinguished, rather than exist independently of distinction.

2.1 Metaphors and understanding

Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 3) demonstrate that "*...metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature*". Their book Metaphors We Live By, and subsequent writings on metaphors, has had a large impact on many research areas, but not agriculture. "*The essence of metaphor*", they write, "*is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another*" (*ibid.*, p5). Metaphors may thus be said to structure our understandings, as "*metaphors have entailments through which they highlight and make coherent certain aspects of our experience*" (*ibid.*, p156).

Apart from making available a range of experiences, metaphors have been claimed to *create* our realities when acted upon (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Krippendorff 1993). Rorty (1980: 12) claims that "*it is pictures rather than propositions, metaphors rather than statements, which determine most of our*

philosophical convictions". Shotter (1993: 9) writes of new ways of talking that "*construct new ways of being*"; with different metaphors allowing these new ways of talking (cf. Rorty 1989). If these claims are valid, then ways of working with metaphors become important. This research is concerned with ways of working with metaphors.

An illustration of this creative, or generative, function of metaphors is given by Schön (1979: 257-259), who describes the development of a new paintbrush. This paintbrush used new synthetic bristles, but was unsatisfactory in applying an even coat of paint. Then somebody observed that "a paintbrush is a kind of pump". This was taken as an invitation to start to consider a paintbrush AS a pump. Certain aspects of the paintbrush and its performance "came to the foreground". Attention then focused on the spaces between the bristles, and these were then thought of as channels through which paint could flow. Other ideas followed from thinking of a paintbrush in terms of a pump. A conclusion was that instead of *wiping* paint onto a surface, a paintbrush could *pump* this paint. It was not so much the image of a pump that was important, but the invitation to consider a process of *pumping*.

This example illustrated quite clearly how understandings of one concept (a paintbrush) can be organised, or structured, in terms of a different concept (pump, or pumping). Schön pointed to metaphors as "seeing as", that is "seeing X as Y"¹. In the process of restructuring, perceptions of both X and Y are transformed (p259). For the time being, "seeing X as Y" gives a reasonable operational definition of a metaphor. "Seeing as" is used in the sense of "*treating X as Y... (that is) talking about X as if it were Y*" (Cooper 1986: 229, quoting from Wittgenstein 1953).

Structuring understandings of one concept in terms of another concept does not imply that understandings are improved, merely that they are different (Schön 1979: 266). But what does it mean to structure our understandings?

"Structure" invokes a metaphor of seeing understandings-as-buildings² (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Terms like *develop*, *build*, and *foundation* can then be used to describe aspects of understanding. Indeed the term "under-stand" is

¹ The notations used by different authors to describe terms in a metaphor varies, and to maintain consistency all notation is transformed into "concept X" (the 'metaphorised' term or 'tenor') and "concept Y" (the metaphorising term or 'vehicle').

² This style of X-as-Y will be used to indicate an explicit reference to a metaphor.

metaphorical, implying that we "stand upon" some foundations.³ Possible foundations, and *ways* of understanding, are explored in the next section.

I have followed a tradition that distinguishes between *cognitive* metaphors (that is, metaphors claimed to have a cognitive function), from either "aesthetic", "ornamental", or "decorative" metaphors (see Cooper 1986; Schön 1963; Soyland 1994). The latter group downgrades the importance of metaphors, and treats them as optional extras or embellishments. As embellishments, or stylistic devices, they can be explained as *deviations* from *proper* use of words and language (see Cooper 1986). Commentators attribute this view of "deviance" to Aristotle, who wrote in Rhetoric that metaphor was a "...way of applying a strange word to an object" and consisted of giving a name that "belongs properly to something else" (quoted in Mooij 1976: 18; and Way 1994: 14; respectively). As deviations, Hobbes called metaphors absurd and misleading, and Locke saw them as powerful instruments of error and deceit (see the commentary by Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) go to some lengths to ensure that their interpretation of metaphors is not associated with poetry and literature, as rich as these might be. "Conventional" metaphors, "everyday" use, and similar phrases are invoked to support metaphor as a central component of our cognitive system. For example, one such claim is "conventional metaphor... pervades our conceptual system" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 196, emphasis added). Kittay (1987: 13) drawing from Richards (1936) likewise indicates that: "*we cannot get through three sentences of ordinary fluid discourse without [the use of metaphor]...*". Way (1994: 2) adds that metaphor "*pervades everyday speech to such an extent that we are rarely aware of its presence*". I discuss "awareness" of metaphors later, however, the general conclusion these writers were alluding to is that metaphor use is everyday and pervasive, and thus important to consider. The next section explores a consequence of Lakoff and Johnson's claim that metaphors are "*a primary mechanism for understanding*" (1980: 196)

³ Rorty (1980) developed a coherent argument showing how most of our epistemological and ontological commitments "are built on certain foundations".

2.1.1 METAPHORS AND A HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE OF UNDERSTANDING

The hermeneutic circle, as espoused by Gadamer (1975) and Heidegger (1962), gives an account of how understandings can emerge. Snodgrass and Coyne (1990: 7) describe the hermeneutic circle: "*...(as) the circular relation of the whole and its parts in any event of interpretation*". They continue: "*we cannot grasp the meaning of a part of a language until we grasp the meaning of a whole; and we cannot understand the meanings of the whole until we grasp the meaning of the parts*" (*ibid.*, p7). In this case, the whole referred to is 'a sentence'. Understandings emerge from an iterative process of understanding both the parts and the whole (Figure 2.1a). If the hermeneutic circle is considered in terms of its component entities, the formulation is very suspect. A whole is assumed to exist, and be identifiable as such (even given the never-ending and iterative nature of the cycle). Further, it assumes that the whole can be broken into parts. The formulation involves a logical contradiction:

"...if we must understand the whole before we can understand the parts and yet the parts derive their meaning from the whole, then understanding can never begin... (this) paradox does not imply that the circle is vicious, but merely that logic is inadequate to the task of understanding" (Snodgrass and Coyne 1990: 8).

If the hermeneutic circle is considered in terms of processes, however, it becomes a more powerful and coherent formulation (Figure 2.1b). Understanding then emerges from an iteration between projecting our pre-understandings and then reflecting on, and revising, these understandings. These pre-understandings can be seen as "anticipations" of possible meanings. Gadamer (1975) has shown that these pre-understandings are unavoidable, and calls them "prejudices" or pre-judgements.

If these pre-understandings are thought of as "fore-structures" (Heidegger 1962), then connections can be made with metaphors: as the claim was made earlier that metaphors structure understandings. Are these pre-understandings *metaphors*? Can metaphors and understandings be thought of in the sort of relationship depicted by the hermeneutic circle? As it stands, the relationship implied between metaphors and understandings appears linear: metaphors structure understanding. This is fine until our understandings, or ways of understanding, are questioned. Acknowledging that we are trapped by the

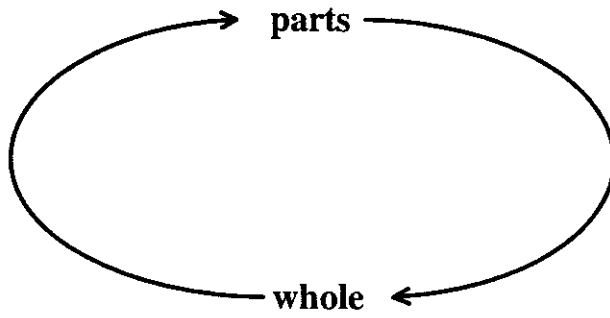


Fig. 2.1a The hermeneutic circle: entities

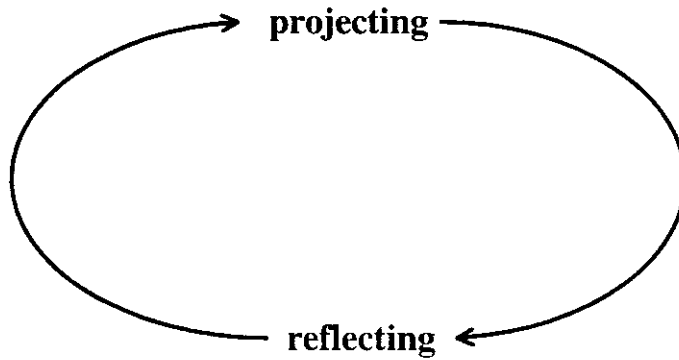


Fig. 2.1b The hermeneutic circle: processes

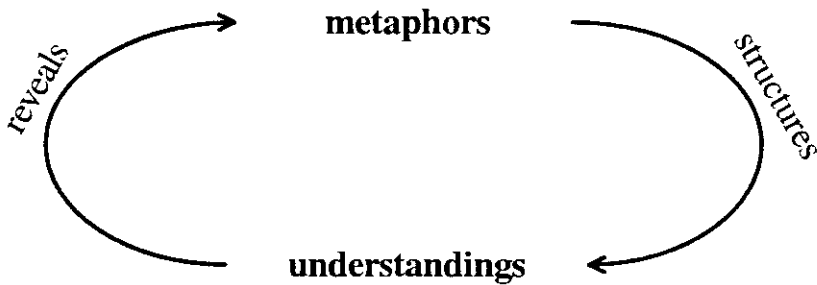


Fig. 2.1c The hermeneutic circle: metaphors and understandings

Figure 2.1 An hermeneutic relationship between metaphors and understandings

limitations of our understandings (Vickers 1972; Morgan 1986) justifies questioning this linear relationship. Further justification is that some metaphors are considered "disabling" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Sontag 1989; see Chapter 4).

A hermeneutic circle, on the other hand, implies that metaphors are revealed or highlighted by reflecting on our understandings (Figure 2.1c). This process is iterative: "*metaphors pre-structure our experiences and are in turn changed by those experiences, a process best described in terms of the metaphors of play and dialogue*" (Coyne and Snodgrass 1991: 12). The process is "...*not something we can choose to use or not, in the manner of a tool. It is, rather, embedded in all thought and action...*" (*ibid.*, p13). Heidegger (1962; 1977) describes this lack of choice as being "thrown" into using such a process. This means that we use metaphors, even when we are not conscious of them. I discuss this distinction later as explicit and implicit metaphors.

A 'hermeneutic' relationship between metaphors and understandings also suggests that the process is iterative and never-ending: "*metaphors and models do not have static, one-off meanings, but are potentially capable of revealing multiple meanings, which can be progressively disclosed by the to-and-fro movement of the hermeneutic circle...*" (Snodgrass and Coyne 1991: 15). It is not just multiple meanings for any one metaphor that are of interest. Rather I am concerned with multiple meanings in general: what I call a 'diversity of understandings'.

2.1.2 METAPHORS AND A DIVERSITY OF UNDERSTANDINGS

A conclusion from the previous analysis is that *if* understandings are different then either different metaphors are being used *or* a different iteration and disclosure by the hermeneutic circle is in operation. Either way, different understandings are possible. Invoking the hermeneutic circle implies that diverse understandings can be: *explained, appreciated, and created.*

The first implication is that differences in understanding indicate the use of different metaphors. Some approaches explicitly acknowledge differences in understandings, but usually as an *a priori* assumption. Two examples are *constructivist* approaches which recognise "multiple realities" (see Kersten 1995) and *systems* approaches which consider different "world-views" or multiple perspectives (see Checkland and Scholes 1990). I propose that a consideration of metaphors can enhance these approaches that espouse different

understandings. Hausman (1989: 9) comes close to this proposal when he suggests that an interest in metaphors is also appropriate to epistemology and ontology⁴. The following discussion on language includes some of these epistemological issues.

The second implication is that understandings can be appreciated by considering the underlying metaphors. Different underlying metaphors *indicate* different understandings. Exploring these different metaphors is a way of addressing differences in understanding. This is an important methodological contribution to both constructivist and systems-based approaches: ways of *appreciating* different understandings. With metaphors it is not just a case of recognising differences in understanding, but being able to work with these differences. This is particularly important to my endeavour to work in 'diverse stakeholder' contexts that exhibit differences in understanding. Diversity among stakeholders suggests many different metaphors are being used. Further, metaphors can contradict and complement other metaphors, just as understandings do (see Shotter 1993).

An interesting feature of ToT-based research is that it is predicated on different understandings: researchers have different understandings to farmers. However, I propose that one major "trap" of ToT-based research is that it does not *appreciate* differences in understanding because "transfer" implies one particular understanding will be adopted by others. I am interested also in including understandings of a range of people involved in bringing about future countrysides. Hence considering different metaphors provides a way to appreciate different understandings: my third response to the thesis question.

The third implication is that considering different metaphors can lead to different understandings. Focusing on metaphors might allow us to change the metaphors that we use, and hence trigger the possibility of changing our understandings. The possibility that different understandings can be triggered, or created, by considering metaphors forms an important component of researching *with* people (Chapter 3). I am interested in how we can focus on metaphors, and how space can be created in which different metaphors can be considered.

⁴ A brief definition of epistemology is 'how we know', or 'the nature of knowledge'. Epistemology is often used as shorthand for 'epistemological and ontological commitments', with ontology being defined as 'the nature of existence'.

These three implications are important, though not totally new. Gareth Morgan, for example, has recognised the third point explicitly in using metaphors to manage and design organisations and to reframe organisational problems (Morgan 1986; 1993). He touches on the second implication when he uses metaphors to diagnose, or to "read" an organisation. Different metaphors provide different ways of "reading" the "text" or organisation. I discuss his work further as part of Chapter 8.

This section has explored relationships between metaphors and understandings, and has laid the basis for research *using* metaphors. Further explication of metaphors is necessary, and I now consider what metaphors can reveal about language. Way (1994: 27) claims that *"any theory of metaphor will necessarily involve assumptions and implications about the nature of language"*.

2.2 Metaphors and language

At this point, this thesis could mushroom out to discuss the many views on language. Rorty (1989) warns that language is contingent, in the sense that we cannot step outside of language to view it and also that language is the product of a large number of contingencies. As such, it is futile to try to explain what language "is". Pragmatists like Rorty prefer to concentrate on *uses* of language (Rorty 1980; 1989). I consider what metaphors can reveal about the uses of language, some epistemological consequences, and some implications for research focusing on the use of metaphors.

Aristotle's label of metaphors-as-deviations from proper use, in Rhetoric, provides a starting point to consider metaphors and language. 'Proper' use demands that there is a use which is deemed universal and correct. One useful reference point is that provided by 'ideal language' theorists, for example the writings of Russell and early Wittgenstein (see Way 1994). Language is broken down into its "atomistic" propositions, and the meaning of each of these propositions is clearly defined by a correspondence between words and what the words denote. Ideal language supports logical positivism, an epistemological position which views 'reality' as being described by clearly defined propositions⁵. Language is seen as a means for representing that reality. An "unproductive" notion of metaphor resulted: metaphors need to be

⁵ From this example, it can be seen how views on metaphors and language necessarily invoke epistemological and ontological assumptions (and vice versa).

avoided or explained away (Krippendorff 1993). Perhaps the best argument against this view of language, and metaphors, is provided by noting how proponents of this view turned away from it. One of the most notorious was Wittgenstein, who instead adopted a view of language as being part of an activity: that is, a "language-game" (again, see Way 1994).

Proper use of language also draws attention to a distinction between metaphoric and literal language. 'Literal' though, if equated with *correct* or *true*, runs into the same difficulties as those just outlined. Metaphors have been said to "carry truth" (see Cooper 1986: 5), but also to be blatantly false (*ibid.*, p201-2). Without getting into a discussion of what 'truth' is, it is worth observing Nietzsche's definitions of truth: as "*a mobile army of metaphors*"; and as "*metaphors that have become worn out*" (quoted in Cooper 1986: 258, 239). Nietzsche also claimed that: "*...metaphor is the basic principle of language and that so-called literal talk is a kind of frozen sediment of metaphor*" (*ibid.*, p2). Literal language can thus be seen as *frozen, dead* or *established* metaphors. Metaphors 'die' from both repeated use and acceptance. Hence the distinction between literal and metaphoric becomes a distinction based on whether a metaphor is 'familiar' or not. Rorty (1989: 16) portrays this process of language change vividly in terms of a coral reef: "*... old metaphors dying off into literalness, and then serving as a platform and foil for new metaphors*". This is coming close to a claim that "all language is metaphorical" which has been explored by most writers on metaphors.

If all language can be considered as metaphorical, then the implications for epistemology and ontology are profound. Schön (1963: 45) elaborates: "*...the claim that language is metaphorical is no small claim. It has the most serious implications for our notions of thinking and of the world, and the relation of our thinking to the world*"⁶. One important implication for metaphors, is that they can only be described by invoking other metaphors. In other words, people use metaphor to explain metaphor (Soyland 1994). A concept of 'metaphor of metaphor' underlines some of the second-order considerations that I discuss later.

A statement that 'all language is metaphorical' also supports a thesis of 'the primacy of metaphors' (see Soyland 1994). Schön (1963) explores what that might mean in terms of both an extension of discourse (that is, how we change

⁶ Note the careful reference to "notions of the world" rather than "the world".

the terms in language) and an extension of concepts (how we change our concepts). Schön proposes that emergence of new concepts came by a process of "displacement of concepts", where "*new concepts came through the shift of old concepts to new situations*" (*ibid.*, p53). Metaphors are, he writes, "*the traces left by the displacement*" (*ibid.*, p41). Way (1994: 8) views metaphors as being a "*method for assimilating new knowledge*". Displacement of concepts is seen as a plausible way of dealing with the question of emergence of new concepts; what can be called the "creativity" enabled by metaphors. Often, commentators refer to metaphors as treating the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar⁷ (for example, Schön 1979; Watson and Wood-Harper 1995). Thus the formulation of "seeing X-as-Y" is refined to say that "X" is an unfamiliar concept, and "Y" is a familiar concept (or an "already-named-process"). However this is misleading and there appears little justification that one concept is indeed familiar. An example is how the metaphor of "a quantum jump" is used to indicate a large gap, where in physics a quantum is very small, and a quantum change is a step or discontinuous change. Searle (1979) argues that a metaphor is a statement about X rather than Y, and Y can be false. However, to return to the idea of emergence of new concepts, the unfamiliar/familiar formulation supports a claim by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) that metaphorical descriptions are necessary when you are dealing with abstract concepts. I argue later that any description can be considered metaphorical; a necessary consequence of seeing language as metaphorical.

Krippendorff (1993) outlines six metaphors of "everyday" perceptions of language and communication "in use". These were the: container, conduit, control, transmission, war, and dance-ritual metaphors. Each embodied different aspects of language use, and Krippendorff states his preference for the dance-ritual metaphor. Krippendorff's work provides a reflective look at what metaphors can reveal about *uses* of language, and consolidates a position that language is metaphorical. Krippendorff suggests that metaphors can provide "windows" into different ways of understanding, which is similar to the suggestion that metaphors can be used to appreciate diverse understandings.

Language-as-metaphorical suggests that literal language can be considered a subset, or special case, of metaphorical language. This probably inspired Schön to state that: "... *vagueness and ambiguity become the rule, the 'natural'*

⁷ In the process of restructuring the unfamiliar concept, both concepts are changed (Schön 1963; 1979).

state from which the artificial clarity of formal systems is a deviation" (Schön 1963: 49-50). A literal statement can be considered to have a closed or defined meaning, and to be just one possibility out of many (Hesse 1988). However, Rorty (1989: 19) has warned that as well as a reductionist view, which disregards metaphors, there is also a "romantic" view to make metaphors wonderful and disregard literal language. Rorty claims that metaphors are only possible against a backdrop of literal language, otherwise language would be a "bubble" with no use (*ibid.*, 41). Cooper (1986) similarly concludes that metaphor assumes the existence of the literal.

Way (1994: 19) provides a different definition of literal language: that used to "*emphasise a statement*". This can be paraphrased as "listen to me" which, according to Maturana (1988), is how most people refer to "reality" and "certainty". The desire to emphasise statements comes close to an "all language is rhetorical" position portrayed by Soyland (1994). If all language is considered as rhetorical, then the distinction between 'embellishment' and 'cognitive' metaphors would also disappear.

The discussion to date has supported Eco's (1983) claim that every discourse on metaphors originates in a fundamental choice between language-as-metaphorical, or language as rule-based. Under the second view, metaphors are 'deviations'. Coyne (1995) talks of rule-based language in terms of classifications, with metaphors as 'mis-classifications'. Viewing language-as-metaphorical is a further shift towards viewing metaphors as *everyday*, rather than being confined to poetry, and supports my claim that metaphors are an important consideration in research.

One final aspect of language-as-metaphorical is that many distinctions assume that metaphors are used deliberately, especially for rhetoric and effect. The presentation of the hermeneutic circle highlighted that metaphors can be considered part of our understanding, and that awareness of metaphors is selective (revealed by whatever understandings we have at that time). This touches on Schön's point that "*a set of words may be said to be a metaphor*" (Schön 1963: 35). Hausman (1989: 198) calls metaphors: "*...either verbal or non-verbal artifacts*". As artifacts, emphasis can go to how metaphors are distinguished as such. However, keeping the operational definition of "seeing X-as-Y", I first consider what is happening *inside* a metaphor and how metaphors are said to (re)-structure a concept.

2.3 How metaphors restructure different domains

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) highlight a metaphor's "entailments", that is, consequences of thinking in a particular way. Restructuring a concept appears to be linked with these entailments. Snodgrass and Coyne (1991) pointed to the Greek origins of the word metaphor (*metaphora*), meaning transfer. Hence metaphor was seen as *"the transfer of one concept to another"* (*ibid.*, p7). The use of the word 'transfer' provides a convenient starting point for considering how metaphors work.

'Transfer' implies a separation of two domains, which is unavoidable given the definition of "seeing X-as-Y". Otherwise *"...one concept would actually be the other, not merely understood in terms of it"* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 13)⁸.

'Transfer' implies a movement between two domains: but what is said to move? One possibility is that it is a transfer of meaning ('meaning-shift', see Way 1994) or significance (Shotter 1993), although this treats meaning as an entity 'contained' in language. Krippendorff (1993) discusses implications of seeing language as a container. Kittay (1987) offers a different possibility: that transfer involves a "displacement of signs". A sign represents an arbitrary relation between a speech sound (signifier) and a concept (signified) (Potter and Wetherall 1987). Metaphor then becomes a transfer of "relations" between semantic fields. Kittay (1987: 6) uses this definition, but prefers to see metaphors as *"fusing two different domains"* rather than as a transfer. A third possibility is that a metaphor transfers, or *"projects"* upon the primary subject, a *"set of associated implications"* (from Black 1979: 28). Associated implications can be interpreted as "entailments". All three of these possibilities have been built into theories of how metaphors work.

I contrast five of these theories as to how metaphors work, under the labels: evocative; comparison; substitution; verbal-opposition; and interaction. Way (1994: 30) concludes that:

"each of these approaches ... has something significant to say about how metaphor operates; however each also has difficulty in accounting for the full range and expressive power of our metaphorical language".

⁸ This quote is slightly out of context, as Lakoff and Johnson are talking about restructuring being partial and not total. However, it also demonstrates a separation of domains.

2.3.1 METAPHORS AS EVOCATIVE

The theory that metaphors are evocative rejects the notion that metaphors can have a cognitive content, and concentrates on the effect a metaphor can produce. This theory appears appropriate under assumptions of language-as-rhetorical. Metaphors are thus "...*meaningless, and it is only the emotive effect that a metaphor can produce... (and they are) insightful only to the extent they stimulate the emotions of the hearer*" (Way 1994: 31; see also Rorty 1989). Metaphors "work" by creating a shock: "*the outstanding characteristic of metaphor is the sort of shock which it produces*" (Henle 1958, quoted in Mooij 1976: 18).

Way (1994: 31) suggested that this theory contributes to the view that metaphors are "deviant" and also to positivist views. However, Rorty (1989, quoting from Davidson 1981) puts a different light on this theory, that a metaphor is meaningless because language does not contain meanings nor is it a medium for representing reality (see also Krippendorff 1993).

Under this theory, a measure for the effectiveness of a metaphor would include its ability to create an effect and to say something unexpected. This effect may have something to do with aspects that are revealed by a metaphor, such as noticing new features of a paintbrush by seeing it as a pump (cf. Schön 1979). Davidson (1981, quoted in Coyne 1995: 261-2) agrees that metaphors make us notice "*certain things*", and indirectly offers two explanations of why metaphors are shocking: because they are "*untrue statements that are not lies*", and because they are used in a *context* that determines a certain effect. However, mechanisms by which metaphors produce a shock appear rather undeveloped. In spite of this, the evocative theory covers some important aspects of how metaphors are said to work.

2.3.2 METAPHORS AS COMPARISONS

A comparison theory of metaphor implies that a metaphor compares the features of two domains. The comparison can be either explicit or implicit: "*a metaphor compares things without spelling out the comparison*" (Bateson 1972: 56). Thus a metaphor becomes a kind of simile (X is like Y).

Fogelin (1988: 86) is one of the few people to criticise Lakoff and Johnson's account of metaphors, and states that metaphors *are* comparisons:

"To put it soberly... Lakoff and Johnson have not shown, as they claim, that most of our normal conceptual system is metaphorically structured... but instead, that most of our normal conceptual systems is structured through comparison. With this rephrasing, a seeming paradox is replaced by a claim that probably no-one will deny, even if it hasn't been taken seriously enough."

Fogelin (1988) thus views metaphors as a kind of simile (X is like Y), where often words such as "like" or "as" have been omitted. This kind of simile is commonly referred to as an "elliptical simile". Words are omitted "for convenience or heightened interest" (Mooij 1976: 29). Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 153) do consider a comparison view of metaphor: "X is like Y, in respects A, B, C", and they conclude that "metaphors can be based on isolated similarities" (emphasis added). However, any similarities are created and are not inherent. This and other criticisms of the comparison theory are now discussed.

There are three main criticisms of a comparison theory. The first is that comparison implies that similarities exist between two domains *before* the metaphor is used. Schön (1979: 260) denounces this view as "... seriously misleading". Instead, a metaphor has been said to *create* similarities (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980), and these features are attributed after the event, that is, *after* the metaphor has been invoked (Schön 1963). This creation of similarities is consistent with the "generative" or creative properties of metaphors (see Hausman 1989). Way (1994: 37) adds that the comparison theory also assumes that the domains are objects, with known properties, and that it is difficult to compare domains that are totally unknown or are abstract concepts.

A second criticism is that any comparison is selective, and that only some of the many attributes of either domain can be called similar (see Way 1994: 38; Searle 1979). How is the choice made of which features to compare? Fogelin (1988: 91) indicated that this choice: "... depends upon canons of similarity determined by the context". This explanation can perhaps satisfy the criticism about selection, but not other questions. Watson (1995b) points to a logical paradox between meaning and context: that meaning is context-determined but contexts are boundless. Therefore, meaning is not bounded. These questions

regarding context are appropriate for all of the theories of metaphor, so it is unfair to dismiss the comparison theory on the basis of this criticism.

A third criticism is that often a metaphor appears effective because of dissimilarities rather than similarities (Hausman 1989). Examples of this are not given, but it could be linked to the emotive theory, where it is a "shock" value, or incongruence, that makes a metaphor work. Related to this criticism of "dissimilarities" is that for many cases a comparison seems inappropriate. For example, for a "blue mood" there does not seem any point to pursue a comparison between features of an emotional state and features of a colour. The reliance of comparison theory on comparing features is also indirectly criticised by Stanford (1936, quoted in Mooij 1976: 73) that "*...rhetoric avoids busying itself with such details*".

A fourth criticism of invoking a comparison to describe a metaphor is that the comparison usually does not work the other way. This is called the "reversibility" argument, or the "asymmetry" of metaphors (see Way 1994). For example, the illustration used in the introductory chapter of the thesis, a "paintbrush-as-pump", appears non-sensical when in the form "pump-as-paintbrush". A comparison view implies that both forms would be equally valid.

These criticisms tend to obscure the observation that metaphors probably sometimes do function as comparisons. Mooij (1976) indicates that criticisms of the theory are probably due to a careless application of this theory rather than deficiencies with the theory itself, however, the extent of the criticisms suggest otherwise. Ricoeur (1978) has adopted a sensible compromise, that similes and comparisons can be considered as a *sub-set* of metaphors.

2.3.3 METAPHORS AS SUBSTITUTIONS

The substitution theory suggests that metaphors can be completely paraphrased in a literal expression. A metaphor is a deviance from its literal expression, and is "*... easily recognisable as such because, if it were taken literally, it would not tell the truth (since it is not true that Achilles was a lion)*" (Eco 1990: 138). In Eco's example, a literal paraphrase could be: 'Achilles was brave'. Substitution is related to "proper use".

A more sophisticated form of this theory implies that metaphors rely on homonyms: words with the same spelling, but different meaning (Lakoff and

Johnson 1980). Essentially, a word will have different meanings if it is used in a metaphoric or a literal sense. Again, using Eco's example, the word "lion" takes on a different meaning if you were looking at a picture of an animal, or if you were describing a person.

Under this theory, metaphors are used to: i) "...(*substitute*) one expression for another in order to produce an expansion (or a 'condensation') of knowledge at the semantic level" (Eco 1990: 139); and ii) enhance rhetoric: "*the status of metaphor... is that of mere ornamentation: an author chooses to use it instead of a literal equivalent for reasons of style and decoration*" (Way 1994: 34).

The substitution theory has largely been criticised on similar grounds to the arguments against "deviation from proper use", presented earlier in this chapter. One criticism from Hausman (1989: 28) directly contradicts Eco's claim for expansion of knowledge: "*if familiar literal expressions can be substituted for metaphors, then metaphors will reduce to what was antecedently known*" (Hausman 1989: 28). Again, a sensible compromise appears to be that some metaphors are paraphrasable. Other metaphors will defy such attempts.

2.3.4 METAPHORS AS VERBAL-OPPOSITIONS

The verbal-opposition theory assumes that metaphors work because when a literal "interpretation" does not fit attention will go to metaphorical interpretations. That is, when a statement is obviously false, then the hearer will look at the connotations of the terms (Way 1994). Again, under this theory, a metaphor is then an anomaly or incongruence and there is an assumption that a sentence first has a well defined literal meaning. This theory does give an explanation of why a metaphor can be generative: because connotations are actively searched for. However, it implies that a statement is "processed" twice, once for literal meaning, and then for metaphorical meaning.

Even taking into account the assumption that statements can have a literal meaning, this dual processing seems counter-intuitive. Way (1994) outlines some psychology experiments to test reaction times to statements, which suggest that this dual processing is unlikely. Coyne (1995: 256) outlines an argument that suggests that we do not experience something and *then* interpret it, rather we experience something *as* something. Coyne calls *seeing as* "*a basic phenomenon of perception*" (op cit.). Imposing a condition along the lines of "a true nature of X is looked for and if it can not be found a

metaphorical Y is attributed" appears unreasonable and, to repeat a phrase from Krippendorff (1993), "unproductive".

2.3.5 METAPHORS AS INTERACTIONS

The interaction theory suggests that metaphors "work" simply because of an interaction, or tension between two concepts. Further that a metaphor is irreducible in meaning and, unlike other theories, is not expendable (Black 1979). One version of this theory is that a metaphor projects upon the primary subject a "*set of associated implications*" (Black 1979: 28). These associated implications can be seen to: select, emphasise, suppress and organise the primary subject. These associated implications can also *change* as a result of understanding a metaphor. The hermeneutic circle suggested a constant iteration and disclosure of metaphors. Other theories, such as the comparison theory, do not account for a possibility of change (see Way 1994). A second version of an interaction theory comes from Ricoeur (1978). A metaphor works because it is a tension between sameness and difference *through* the copula "is" (see Coyne 1995: 297). That is, 'X-as-Y' invokes a tension between what we do and do not associate with X. Similarities with the first theory, metaphors-as-evocative, are apparent.

This theory appears the most "popular" amongst commentators, especially as interaction indicates that new meanings can *emerge* with a metaphor. Schön (1963: 88) outlines how a metaphor *projects* not just: "*what do you see in X; but find the Y in X*". Black's account has been criticised as it is rather vague (Way 1994), although some aspects such as the "associated implications" appear similar to Lakoff and Johnson's "entailments" (Black was not cited by these authors). Associated implications were thought to be operating "*even when [concepts] are used in their literal sense*" (Way 1994: 48), which adds support to the position that all descriptions are metaphorical (section 2.5). In light of this theory, emphasis can also go to a way of thinking using metaphors, rather than a consideration of how individual metaphors work.

2.4 Metaphors, models and paradigms

A third set of important relationships to consider, after 'metaphors and understandings' and 'metaphors and language', are those between metaphors, models and paradigms. Exploring this third set of relationships leads into a consideration of how metaphors can be distinguished as such. In this section, I

propose that models can be seen as extended metaphors, and that paradigms or theories can be seen as sources of metaphors.

Shotter (1993: 48) indicates that in ordinary conversation, people switch between metaphors, whereas in academic discourse: "*certain metaphors are 'literalised' into pictures or models*". These models are then sustained via institutional practices (*ibid.*, p48). Black (1979: 31) adds that "*every metaphor is the tip of a submerged model*". A metaphor that emerges from these two views is that of a model-as-an extended, or developed, metaphor. Sternberg (1990: 3) also uses that image when looking at scientific theories of intelligence: "*the root source of many of the questions asked about intelligence appears to be the model, or metaphor, that drives the theory and research*". Morgan (1991) outlines a hierarchy between: paradigms (as alternative realities); metaphors (as the basis for schools of thought) and puzzle-solving activities (tools and techniques that operationalise metaphors). This hierarchy appears useful only in that it depicts a similar relationship between paradigms (in Kuhn's terms) and metaphors; one consistent with models-as-extended metaphors. Sternberg concludes that looking at metaphors is: "*...useful in helping us comprehend just what questions our theories are - and are not - addressing*" (*ibid.*, p285).

Checkland and Scholes (1990) contrast models-as-simplifications of reality, with models-as-tools for debate about change. The latter view of models is consistent with seeing models-as-extended metaphors, and avoids the pitfalls of claiming to simplify or represent reality. Considering different metaphors, then, has important ramifications as to the content of any debate about change.

If metaphors underlie models, which in turn underlie theories, then an interesting question is whether these models and theories can be considered a source of metaphors (as the metaphors might not be explicit). Patton (1990: 82) depicts how Chaos theory, for example, "*offers a new set of metaphors*". Morgan (1994) depicts how autopoiesis, a theory described by Maturana and Varela (1987), can also act as a metaphor. McClintock and Ison (1994a) pursue a theme that metaphors can be revealed, or triggered, through considering different theoretical⁹ frameworks. In this case, 'rationalistic' and 'constructivist' frameworks are contrasted to reveal diverse metaphors such as agriculture-as-production and agriculture-as-design. One theoretical

⁹ in this sense, epistemological frameworks.

framework implicitly used in this research has been "systems thinking", which I now explore in terms of what metaphors it can trigger.

2.4.1 METAPHORS AND SYSTEMS

Whilst it is difficult to call "Systems" a theory, or even a set of theories, if it is considered as such¹⁰, it triggers an interesting set of metaphors. The Systems Department at the Open University uses the following definition of *a system* in its teaching: "...a set of parts interconnected for a purpose". A system is a whole¹¹ distinguished from its environment, and Systems is then a commitment to thinking in 'wholes'. The definition enables a focus on "relationships" and "purpose", and core principles developed include those of environment, boundary, perspective, levels, emergence and iteration. To avoid being labelled "primitive" (cf. Checkland 1992), the concepts can be introduced as follows: a *system* is distinguished from its *perceived environment*, by placing a *boundary*. This boundary will usually separate what is perceived to be of concern from what is not (or something that can be influenced from what cannot be). Where this boundary is placed will depend on the particular *perspective* of the person who distinguishes the whole, and also the perceived *purpose* of the system. This purpose will often be different from the purpose attributed to individual entities falling within the boundary, which leads to the concept of *emergence* (where different properties are attributable to "a whole" rather than attributed to "the parts")¹². A whole can be considered a part of a larger system (and so-on) which leads to a concept of *level*. *Iteration* refers to re-defining the boundary of a system by considering different perspectives, purposes and/or levels.

The question at hand is what can be revealed by considering possible relationships between metaphors and systems? (although this question has been subverted somewhat by the previous discussion which postulated that

¹⁰ "Systems" can be viewed as a commitment to using a concept of "system" (not "a system"). One problem with considering Systems in this way, has been a tendency to associate this commitment with a "meta-discipline" such as "General Systems Theory". A second problem has been ontological confusion about whether a system exists, or not. At its simplest, the main commitment of Systems is to think in terms of wholes. (An interesting diversion would be to look at a hermeneutic circle between parts and whole with respect to systems). An alternative "metaphor" for Systems is "a tool-kit", where choices of concepts, methodologies and methods become available.

¹¹ More precisely, an adaptive whole (Checkland and Scholes 1990).

¹² See McClintock and Ison (1994a) for a discussion of emergence, and also "emergence through dialogue".

Systems might become a relevant "source" of metaphors). I can think of five possible links:

- where we, as researchers, place a boundary, and what we consider a system, depends on our understandings, which in turn depend on certain metaphors. Considering different metaphors might be the same as drawing different boundaries and constructing different systems. Hence an "iteration" might consist of considering different metaphors;
- processes of distinguishing a metaphor from its context might be similar to processes of distinguishing a system from its environment. That is, an understanding of metaphors might allow us to understand why we place a certain boundary;
- emergence can be linked to "interactions" and relationships. One theory as to how metaphors work stresses "interactions", hence exploring metaphors can enhance our understandings of emergence. Both emergence and metaphors are associated with something new and unexpected, and identifying metaphors might reveal what aspects emerge from a system;
- some of the tools of analysis for systems, especially diagramming that depicts relationships in a visual manner, are appropriate for metaphors. Metaphors are not just verbal (cf. Hausman 1989). Similarly, some systems can be thought of in verbal terms; and
- systems can be *represented* by metaphors, using a similar argument that a diagram or a model can portray a system (cf. The Open University 1996). Representation can be confused with "correspondence", so some care is needed before this link is explored.

As a source of metaphors, however, Systems is particularly rich. Any of the concepts above can be viewed *as* metaphors¹³. "Emergence", in particular, has potential to reveal different aspects than "cause-effect" formulations. For example, learning-as-an emergent property has different implications for teaching than learning-as-imparted knowledge. Emergence also implies a commitment to process, in contrast to a commitment to a "product" or objectives. When considered as metaphors, the adjectives/adverbs 'systemic'

¹³ refer to the next section for how these concepts can be considered *as* metaphors.

and 'systematic' also have considerable exploratory power. Other metaphors "obtained" from Systems include those to do with relationships, networks, and iteration. If other theories can also be considered a source for similar metaphors, then that does not detract from Systems-as-a source; indeed it could be seen to strengthen Systems' claims of being "multi- and inter-disciplinary". The many formulations of Systems can be seen to utilise different sets of metaphors, however, to consider which metaphors these utilise is beyond the scope of the current research.

Discussing models and Systems has been necessary to 'locate' concepts surrounding metaphors. The next section addresses an important issue of how a metaphor can be distinguished as such.

2.5 How can we agree that a metaphor is "a metaphor"?

Until this point, an operational definition of X-as-Y has been satisfactory to explore relationships between metaphors, understandings, language, and models, and also to consider theories of how metaphors have been thought to work. This operational definition needs to be consolidated, so that agreement can be reached on "what is being called a metaphor?". A metaphor is not assumed to exist prior to being distinguished as "a metaphor", a position that I clarify in Chapter 4 when I invoke Heidegger's (1962; 1977) concept of "bringing forth". Schön (1963: 35) supports a view that *"a set of words may be said to be a metaphor"*. I also do not assume that a metaphor has to be explicit.

Kittay (1987: 40) proclaims that we do recognise metaphors, it is just that our criteria for doing so are not explicit. He criticises the "unit of discourse" traditionally taken to be a metaphor, the phrase or sentence. Some of the problem as Kittay sees it, is that a metaphor is not a recognised unit of discourse. Way (1994: 14) agrees that there is *"no consistent syntactic form"* for a metaphor, a point that Eco (1983: 254) echoes when he claims that *"no algorithm exists for metaphor"*. A further problem is that a metaphor goes beyond words to "thought" (Way 1994: 5, quoting from Richards 1936). This leads to a question "how can we name a metaphor as such?" Two possible criteria, obvious falseness and non-familiarity, were tarnished by the analysis of 'metaphors and language'. Another issue is that if all language is metaphorical, then it may be difficult to distinguish *individual* metaphors within that. What is distinguished as a metaphor also intuitively depends on the reasons for distinguishing it as such.

The operational definition provides a basis to explore how a metaphor can be distinguished. "X-as-Y" comes close to a "metonymic model" discussed by Lakoff (1987: 84). The following characteristics (of X-as-Y) were outlined:

- *"there is a "target" concept X to be understood for some purpose in some context;*
- *there is a conceptual structure containing both X and another concept Y;*
- *Y is either part of X or closely associated with it in that conceptual structure. Typically, a choice of Y will uniquely determine X, within that conceptual structure;*
- *compared to X, Y is either easier to understand, easier to remember, easier to recognise, or more immediately useful for the given purpose in the given context;*
- *a metonymic model is a model of how X and Y are related in a conceptual structure; and*
- *the relationship is specified by a function from Y to X."*

The first, third and fourth points are key points and are discussed in turn. The first point is that there "is" a target concept, which implies that a distinction has already been made. This provides a clue that a metaphor relates to how this distinction is made and even perhaps that the metaphor is part of the distinction, as implied by the discussion of the hermeneutic circle. The rest of Lakoff's first point is also important: "...to be understood for some purpose" brings the reasons for distinguishing a metaphor to the foreground; and "...in some context" reinforces the idea that a metaphor is a distinction, and that a metaphor is not independent of the context in which it is situated. Lakoff's third point draws attention to the restructuring "caused by" a second concept (Y). Lakoff claims that the choice of Y is "*motivated by the structure of our experience*" (*ibid.*, p276). His fourth point lists some of the motivations for restructuring the concept in the first place.

Lakoff's formulation can be strengthened considerably by simplifying it to "we describe concept X"¹⁴. Thus, a metaphor can be distinguished *as* a description! Hence whenever "as" or "is" is used, there is a probability that a description, and a metaphor, is being invoked. It is also consistent with the two powerful formulations of "all language is metaphoric" and "all language is rhetorical". It can be linked to "pictures" and "images" in a non-verbal sense, and also to actions. So the very simple words "is" or "as", can alert us to a metaphor being distinguished!

Some writers have focused on the copula "is", the verb "to be", and the prepositional "as" attributed by a metaphor (Ricoeur 1978; Coyne 1995). Other writers have focused on "stories" that embody metaphors (Chapter 4). However, distinguishing metaphors as descriptions, that use the words "is" or "as", gives a pragmatic way of working with metaphors and hence understandings. The words "is" and "as" are so common that it explains why metaphors can be considered as everyday phenomena that structure understandings, and also why we are often not aware of them. Some descriptions might not be considered metaphorical, for example, the closed relationships implied by mathematics. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 85) imply that even if the second concept can be considered a sub-category rather than a metaphor, in the strictest sense, then there are still advantages of treating the relationship as being metaphorical. One advantage, from my analysis of the hermeneutic circle, is that calling any description a metaphor gives a way of explaining, appreciating and creating diverse understandings.

By drawing on some theoretical aspects of metaphors, I have established "a way of thinking using metaphors". Metaphors give a way of understanding our understandings, and how we use language. This enables me to move on to my second response to the thesis question, and consider metaphors of research.

¹⁴ Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 8-9) proposed that a metaphor is invoked when it is not *necessary* to describe a concept, but we do for cultural reasons. I don't think this is implying that a description, hence metaphor, is optional.

2.6 Reflections on Chapter 2

A lot has been written on metaphors. This is not surprising if metaphors are everyday, pervasive and important to the ways in which we understand, as I have claimed. A lot of the literature seems to use overworked and artificial examples, such as "man is a wolf", which has acted against the 'inspiration' that I have found in metaphors. I have tried to minimise replication of these examples. In addition, the example that I have chosen, "paintbrush-as-pump" perhaps portrays my beliefs that metaphors are 'serious' and not just constrained to poetry and literature.

My account of the hermeneutic circle is liberal, that is unusual, and I like the coherence that it gives to an exploration of links between metaphors and understandings. As an aside, I find that I can extend this sort of analysis to an awareness of metaphors itself. For example, I can imagine that an understanding of metaphors requires an awareness of metaphors, which in turn requires an understanding that metaphors might be possible. This chapter might be totally meaningless to someone who has not contemplated metaphors before. I discuss some implications of this in later chapters, as it is relevant to working with people who have different understandings of what metaphors 'are' (see Chapters 8-10).

I put the 'are' in inverted commas to indicate that I am aware of ontological implications of making such a claim with regard to metaphors. To be consistent, I should rephrase the sentence to make it as a proposition by using words like 'if' and 'as'. As much as possible, I have tried to do this. However, it becomes very laborious and possibly difficult to read.

In the chapter, I have used 'understanding' without tightly defining how I am using this word. That is partially because it would be a distraction from the focus on metaphors and their relationships, and partially because a 'common' use of the word is sufficient. An alternative formulation that I could have used would be "what do we have to agree before we say understanding has occurred?" (cf. Fell and Russell 1994). If my interest was a theoretical exposition of understanding, then I would use this. However, in this chapter, I am more interested in 'setting the scene' for *using* metaphors as part of research. This justifies also my exclusion of terms and concepts that are quite clearly related to 'understandings', such as meaning, cognition, experience and

learning. I realise a danger in using the word 'understanding' is that it might be interpreted in either a 'mind-body' or a 'thought-action' dualism. I use the word in the same sense as Gadamer (1975), that understanding *embodies* actions and application.

Two concepts I do feel uncomfortable in not discussing are: Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) insistence on metaphors having a 'bodily experience', and Black's (1979) image of metaphors acting as a 'filter' or 'lens'.¹⁵ Although I am aware that it is not possible to discuss everything, and choices are necessary, I found it difficult to incorporate these concepts in the account that I presented.

Two points that I may not have emphasised enough are: there are many metaphors, and metaphors do not have to be used deliberately. The first point should be apparent through the rest of this thesis. The second is encompassed in my discussion of "bringing forth".

The points I have emphasised in this chapter are:

- metaphors can be linked to understandings, and can inform research that aims to work with diverse understandings;
- metaphors play an important role in how we use language;
- metaphors work by 'restructuring' domains;
- 'Systems' is a fertile ground for considering metaphors; and
- a metaphor can be seen as a description, and recognised by the use of the words 'is' and 'as'.

In the next chapter I consider the second response to the thesis question, and look at how metaphors can inform what we mean by 'research'.

¹⁵ please note that I am using *image* and *metaphor* interchangeably.

Chapter 3 Metaphors of research and researching *with* people

metaphors provide a way to reflect on research itself

In this chapter, I elaborate on the second answer to the thesis question. I have just established that metaphors are linked to our understandings, and what is of interest here is our understandings of 'research'. I outline what researching *with* people might entail, and how it is connected to a consideration of the position of the researcher. I then choose some metaphors of research that are consistent with this endeavour, which define various roles that a researcher can take in this kind of research. I also introduce a distinction between *research* and *researcher* context, in order to appreciate 'the position of the researcher'.

3.1 Researching *with* people

The word 'with', in researching *with* people, emphasises my endeavour to involve people in research. On one hand, this entails being explicit about my own position as a researcher. I need to include myself, as a person, in this research. I am *immersed* in the research, and I cannot step outside of my own understandings, actions and interests. Further, the research offers a forum in which I can reflect on, and change, my own understandings. Researching *with* people allows this 'self-development' role to be acknowledged.

On the other hand, the word 'with' indicates how I wish to involve other people: as partners in a joint process of inquiry. Researching *with* people is substantially different from researching *on* people, researching *about* people and researching *for* people (Reason and Heron 1986; Heron 1996).

Researching with people does not aim to describe people, or what they do, rather it aims to work with people on issues of concern. 'Who does the research, and in what capacity?' is a question relevant to a joint researching process. Researching *with* people can address two shortcomings of ToT-based agricultural research: a separation between doing and using research; and an attempt to transfer universal understandings rather than to appreciate any diversity.

Heron (1996) gives two motivations for seeing people as partners in research: political and epistemological. On political grounds, he states that people have a

right to "...participate in decisions that concern and effect them. The democratisation of research management is as much a human rights issue as the democratisation of government at national and local levels" (*ibid.*, p21). On epistemological grounds, he claims that people participate in their own knowing, and that practical knowledge, that is, knowing how, is "*the fulfilment of the knowledge quest*" (*ibid.*, p20; p34). Knowing comes from participation in research cycles of reflection and action, which is embodied in 'Co-operative Inquiry' as he calls it.

Heron's two motivations are not novel, in that a great deal of literature on 'participation' and Rural Development is also based on similar, and more expanded, claims. One very prominent example of researching *with* people comes from the writings of Paulo Freire (Freire 1972; 1979). Freire's interest is in 'raising consciousness' of peasants by means of a 'dialogue'. Even though Freire is more closely identified with education, rather than research *per se*, his work on dissolving a divide between 'teacher' and 'student' has been very influential. Researching *with* people is concerned with a similar dichotomy between researcher and subject (Heron 1996: 19): a dichotomy questioned by both the position of the researcher and a "joint" process of research.

3.2 Choosing metaphors of research

This chapter is predicated on my response to the thesis question that metaphors provide a way of reflecting on possible roles of research. I use my understanding of 'researching *with* people' as an ethic for *choosing* metaphors of research. The word 'choose' is important as it embeds the following discussion of research metaphors *in* my research. I am not trying to detach myself from my position as a researcher. The four metaphors that I choose to illustrate this research are:

- research-as-action;
- research-as-narrative;
- research-as-facilitation; and
- research-as-responsible.

These metaphors define various roles relevant to researching-with-people.

3.2.1 RESEARCH-AS-ACTION: DISSOLVING DIVIDES BETWEEN DOING AND USING RESEARCH

Two divides become operational when 'Research' is highlighted as an academic activity. The first is a divide between researchers who do the research, and people who might use or implement it. The second divide is between people that do the research and other people involved in the research: researcher and research subjects. In some cases the divides coincide, when the research subjects are considered as users. These divides have been questioned in three different ways: in reactions to Transfer of Technology (ToT) models; from within a tradition of Action Research (AR), and from an awareness of different possible epistemologies. A single metaphor, research-as-action, consolidates these efforts to dissolve the divides as well as appreciate different people's *understandings* in the research process.

These two divides are not as apparent in research conducted outside academia. However, the title 'researcher' confirms that some people claim to do research, and it is a specialist activity. In agricultural research, a separation between those researchers that do the research and those farmers who use research also highlights the prominent ToT assumptions. The separation has led to 'extension' activities specifically to bridge these communities. Conceptualising a link between research and farming, especially a one-way link, does not address issues of researching *with* people as partners.

Kersten (1995) reviews major criticisms of ToT assumptions, and it's associated Diffusion of Innovations (DoI) model, and goes on to discuss some of the approaches that have emerged in response to these criticisms. These 'alternative' approaches include: Farming Systems Research, Farmer First and Last approaches¹, Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems, and the application of Soft Systems Methodology to agricultural R&D. Some of these approaches have explicitly referred to farming as a "system" and a desire to include farmers in agricultural research. In this way, these approaches are implicitly concerned with a separation of activities between researchers and farmers. However, Kersten implies that few of these approaches acknowledge a possibility that understandings can be diverse. For the purposes of this thesis it is not intended to review each of these approaches, rather to indicate that they contribute to an understanding of working with people. Many of these

¹ which includes a host of 'participative' approaches, as reviewed in Cornwall *et al.* (1994).

approaches are based in Rural Development contexts, in which research and development are tightly linked. Development is an active process. An implication for my research is that research-as-action also includes concepts of development.

Action Research (AR), by contrast, has always concerned itself with 'action' and implementing change. Wadsworth (1991: 63) explains how AR dissolves any distinction between doing and using research:

"AR is not research followed by hoped for action. It is action which is intentionally researched and modified, leading to the next stage of action which is then again intentionally researched... (AR) is an active set of consecutive cycles² of action, reflection, consideration of better ways of proceeding followed by putting them into action..."

AR is usually attributed to the work of Kurt Lewin (as with McTaggart 1991; Wadsworth 1991). Lewin aimed to expand on the maxim "learning by doing" and also to both improve practical problem solving *and* discover basic knowledge (Morgan 1993). This dual research 'function' is interpreted by McTaggart as people organising *"the conditions under which they [both] learn from their experiences and make this experience accessible to others"* (1991: 170). AR and experiential learning appear as equivalent processes. There are several AR traditions, one of the most notable is Participatory Action Research (PAR). The title 'participatory' reflects attempts to create political change: one strand with 'peasants' in 'developing' countries (see Fals-Borda 1988); and one with 'workers' in organisations in 'developed countries' (see Whyte 1991).

McTaggart (1991: 169) indicates why AR, and *contextual* research, is desirable: *"... it has been demonstrated time and time again that the application of other's research in new social, cultural and economic contexts is unlikely to work. People must conduct substantive research on the practices which affect their lives in their contexts"*. The failure of research to take the context into account is also a common criticism of research conducted under a ToT paradigm. The assumption is either that people can only have relevant experiences and hence learn experientially in the contexts in which they are

² The 'cycles' refer to an important principle in AR of *iteration*. Heron (1996) claims that research cycling can lead to research validity. I also discuss iteration as a System's concept (see 2.4.1).

embedded, or that research conducted outside of that context is likely to be irrelevant.

AR is also explicitly concerned with the relationship between 'researcher' and 'people involved'. All those involved become researchers, as they reflect on their actions and enter into AR cycles of planning-acting-observing-reflecting, and hence all people act. In Heron's terms, the researcher-subject distinction is broken, and "*the subject [is a] fully fledged co-researcher, [and] the researcher [is a] co-subject, participating fully in the action and experience to be researched*" (1981: 20). From this, research-as-action includes everyone involved in the research. 'Co-researchers' can become a label for all those involved in the research.

The notion that a researcher acts, or *participates*, in the research is consolidated by further considering issues to do with epistemology and ontology³. Gadamer provided a means to link metaphors and understanding (see section 2.1), so it is appropriate to consider what he has to say about researchers and research action. It is quite simple: "*we are always already in the situation of having to act*" (Gadamer 1975: 283). That is, we are "*thrown*" into our context, and cannot avoid acting (as with Winograd and Flores 1987: 34). By involvement in research, we do not conduct research then act on it. A researcher is an actor in the research, and will act according to his or her prejudices (see section 2.1)⁴.

This is hardly new! Many philosophers, scientists and researchers have reacted against ideas of separating the researcher from the research, usually by denying that an observer can be 'objective' and detached, or that 'reality' could be known with any certainty⁵. Von Foerster (1984: 11) chose to describe an observer who is aware of making an observation as a "*participant-actor in the drama of mutual interaction*". An 'actor' metaphor is not as passive as an 'observer'

³ a note that 'epistemological issues' have underlined the discussions on ToT and AR, courtesy of emphasis on: where and how research is conducted, whether 'results' can be transferred and used, and experiential learning (knowledge through experience). The following section is mainly concerned with how epistemology affects a researcher- research subject divide.

⁴ and one of this author's prejudices is that a lot of 'agricultural research' does not acknowledge the roles assumed by the researcher.

⁵ many authors can be cited to support this claim. Some authors who have had an impact on this research, that write on this, include: Gadamer, Heidegger, and Maturana; and others are easy to find (for example: Bernstein, Kuhn, Latour, Berger and Luckman). Heidegger's ontology features again in a discussion of 'bringing-forth' metaphors (4.1). Maturana (1988) provided some inspiration for this research, and he makes a useful distinction between 'reality' as an ontological category (things exist) and as an explanatory device (rhetoric, or 'listen to my claim').

metaphor. An actor metaphor inspired Engel (1995: 8) to write of "*my domain of study as complex theatres of innovation in agriculture*". A 'theatre' metaphor suggests many actors. In the case of action research, these other actors are *co-researchers*.

One group of actors that AR, for example, do not consider are other academic researchers. Fish (1989) describes these actors as 'members of an interpretive community'. A research-as-action metaphor implies that research activities *constitute* such a community. This makes a change from seeing research-as-contributing to knowledge. As an actor, a researcher contributes to, and constitutes, an interpretive community. This is very powerful if the interpretive community also acknowledges relationships with potential 'co-researchers'.

Choosing the 'research-as-action' metaphor enables a broad range of literature and research approaches to be embedded in research practice. This metaphor questions distinctions between doing and applying research, and researcher and research subject. Research-as-action is appropriate to exploring metaphors and understandings, as *understandings embody application* (from Gadamer 1975). Metaphors also embody action and, as I discuss later, actions reveal metaphors. Research-as-action has provided a coherent base to articulate researching with people. Other metaphors reveal other aspects implied by 'research', and these are now considered.

3.2.2 RESEARCH-AS-NARRATIVE: FINDING OUT AND PROPOSING DIFFERENT METAPHORS

Research can be simply thought of as 'finding out', and in that sense, research is an everyday activity. As such, research covers a lot of activities ranging from 'what time does the bus go home' to 'how much fertiliser should I put on my wheat crop' to 'what school is good for my children'. Wadsworth calls research "*a process which begins with people asking questions, then setting out to answer them*" (1991: 5). Discussing everyday research is not trivial, and it enables reflection on what types of research can be meaningful and useful. Everyday research is also linked to people's understandings, hence is very relevant for my research.

One example of using a description of research-as-finding out is provided by Webber (1993). "Research" was presented as: "*investigating something which makes a difference to me (the grazier) and which can be incorporated into community knowledge for our benefit*" (*ibid.*, p12). Using such a description

attempted to make research meaningful to participants, by indicating that 'this research' is concerned with issues and topics that are *important* and therefore *relevant*. This research was part of the "Community Approaches to Rangelands Research" (CARR) project (see Ison 1993; Russell and Ison 1993).

Finding out implies new or different understandings. I do not use finding out in the sense of 'discovery'. Rather, based on the previous description of research-as-action, I link finding out to *creation* of new understandings. If new understandings result from different metaphors, then finding out implies *changing* metaphors.

A narrative makes a process of finding out coherent. Narratives, or stories, are seen as one of the ways in which people make sense of their experiences (Polkinghorne 1988: 13), by organising their experiences around themes. A narrative, then, is one way of giving coherence to a process of finding out. For example, this thesis is a narrative giving coherence to my finding out about metaphors and researching with people. A narrative involves describing and reflecting on experiences: two aspects not explicitly recognised in a concept of everyday research.

Narratives also rely on certain metaphors and images (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Reason and Hawkins 1988). Narratives can be linked to ways of describing: an operational definition that I used in the last chapter. Therefore narratives are a way of working with metaphors. In the next chapter I describe some methods that revolved around listening to, and generating narratives. Finding out has already been linked with 'changing metaphors'. Research-as-narrative suggests that research works by describing, exploring and changing the metaphors used in a process of finding out.

If research is about generating and changing metaphors, and narrating that process, then claims that science 'works by metaphor' are appropriate (as with Waldrop 1993; also Boyd 1979). A similar claim can be made for philosophy, in light of Rorty's aims to keep the conversation going: "*to see keeping a conversation going as a sufficient aim for philosophy is to see human beings as generators of new descriptions rather than beings one hopes to be able to describe accurately*" (Rorty 1980: 378). Giving up an endeavour to describe people, and instead work with the metaphors they generate, is akin to researching *with* people.

Two questions arise from comparing research-as-narrative and research-as-action: *who* does the finding out and *who* does the narration? Research-as-facilitation suggests some answers to these questions.

3.2.3 RESEARCH-AS-FACILITATION: CREATING SPACE FOR RESEARCH

If all people involved in the research are actors, then all are immersed in finding out and narration. In academic circles, however, these roles are usually appropriated by 'the researcher'. In researching *with* people, these roles for an academic researcher can be located within a context of how co-researchers find out and make narratives. Whilst research may be 'everyday', people may be too busy with their daily tasks or not have opportunities for reflecting on their actions. This suggests a role for the academic researcher: to *create* opportunities for research. This creative role can be called 'facilitation'.

Facilitation also appears in a variety of fields where it is deemed important to work with groups of people. A distinction is often drawn between process and content, and a facilitator's role is to: "*create a structure and manage a process that allows the participants to safely and productively explore the content*" (Roth *et al.* 1992: 43). Exploring the content can also be called experiential learning (Heron 1989). Group work implies that people do things together, and that this requires some sort of design and co-ordination.

Working in groups is justified by Heron (1996) on the grounds that "*the reality of the other is found in the fullness of our open relation... when we engage in our mutual participation. Hence the importance of co-operative inquiry with other persons involving dialogue...*" (Heron 1996: 11). That is, working in groups is a way of being able to understand other people. This is necessary in diverse stakeholder contexts or, as Røling (1990) and Pretty (1994) describe, group inquiry is needed in complex problem situations.

Researching with people *can* imply group work, and the workshops used in this research are based on group work. However, facilitation is used here in the broader sense of creating favourable conditions, or creating space, for research.

Two domains relevant to this research, where facilitation is highlighted, are 'adult education' and 'rural development'. In education, teaching has been associated with 'imparting knowledge' rather than enabling learning. Ison (1990) claims that within agriculture, teaching has threatened 'sustainable

agriculture' by ignoring the facilitation of learning. In adult education, learning is seen as desirable if it is 'self-directed', that is, a student defines their own learning conditions. If learning is self-directed, then one role for a teacher-as-facilitator is to provide resources for learning (see Brookfield 1986: 63). In rural development, facilitation or 'animation' is associated with enabling communities to improve their own situations, rather than 'outsiders' doing things *for* people in order to help them. Both of these domains use facilitation in the sense of enabling certain activities that might not occur without such prompting. I address whether these activities *should* occur in the next section.

Creating opportunities for research entails at least four functions:

- initiating the research, except where a facilitator is invited into existing research;
- allowing people to anticipate benefits of engaging in a joint process of research;
- anticipating desirable experiences and exploring how these can be triggered; and
- providing the logistical considerations, such as the time and place of any events, for the research to take place.

All of these functions require *relationship building*, which I highlight as an important part of facilitation and researching with people. I describe in later sections how relationship building and 'space' for research can be achieved in practice.

The word 'create' highlights an active role for a facilitator. Facilitation can never be neutral, or non-directive, as can be shown by yet another reference to Gadamer's 'prejudices'. Whether facilitation can only be concerned with process is also debatable. Gregory and Romm (1994) prefer a "self-reflective" facilitator, who is aware of his/her assumptions and can directly intervene to "*contest certain statements which have passed unchallenged by the group*" (*ibid.*, p5). In education, Brookfield (1986: pviii) outlines how facilitation "*incorporates elements of challenge, confrontation, and critical analysis of self and society*". When these active roles for facilitation are combined with participation in the research, a participant-facilitator type role for a researcher is implied. With this role, a researcher cannot just assume a role of facilitation, nor can a researcher just be a participant as there is some responsibility for 'creating space'.

Different roles of a facilitator can be described in terms of explicit metaphors. Bell and Wood-Harper (1992) outline four roles of a systems analyst: a doctor that provides technical expertise and 'fixes' problems; an emancipator that seeks to change states of mind; a teacher that assists with problem solving; and a warrior that actively and radically changes a situation. Bell and Wood-Harper present these metaphors as a way of reflecting on the role of a systems analyst. As such, the roles can also suggest different approaches for facilitation. Another role comes from a popular expression "conducting research". In this metaphor, a researcher is the conductor: co-ordinating a large number of different instruments whilst interpreting a certain score. Facilitation would imply 'releasing the potential' of the orchestra members to play. Conducting does not have the manipulative entailments of other metaphors, though questions could be asked about 'where is the score, and who wrote it?'

As facilitation is an active role, it is likely that any specific roles will change as an inquiry progresses, and as the needs of 'creating space' for research changes. Looking at facilitation in terms of metaphors can enable facilitators to choose appropriate roles, as well as reflect on their roles within research. I have found that 'creating space' is a useful way of reflecting on my role, as well as that of research in general.

Facilitation, however, presents other constraints on research. Creating space for research implies that people have opportunities to engage in a researching process and 'find out'. But who decides on what sort of space, or learning, is desirable? And who says that a researcher makes a 'good facilitator' anyway? Brookfield (1986: 123) indicates that facilitation should only be one metaphor amongst many: *"the concept of the facilitator of learning now exercises something of a conceptual stranglehold on our notions of correct educational practice..."*. The same could be said of claims that facilitation is a desirable role in research. This is where ethical considerations come in, and the next section discusses 'responsibility'.

3.2.4 RESEARCH-AS-RESPONSIBLE: WHO CLAIMS THAT RESEARCH IS 'A GOOD THING'?

An ethic of 'responsibility' is based on self-reflection, and an awareness of possible positions for a researcher. Responsibility necessitates that action, narration and facilitation are seen as three metaphors out of many. Russell and Ison (1993) call for 'responsibility' to replace 'objectivity' as a research ethic. Rorty claims that the attempt to gain objective knowledge can be "*an attempt to avoid the responsibility for choosing one's project*" (1980: 361, drawing on Satre 1956). Responsibility entails removing *a priori* assumptions that *doing* research is 'a good thing'.

As an activity, research may enable different understandings, and different metaphors. However, it might simply consolidate present *undesirable* understandings, or lead to *worse* understandings; where undesirable and worse are judged by the people who hold those understandings. Research might not lead to finding out, the *a priori* assumption before doing research, neither does it have to be 'a good thing'. A researcher then, wanting to conduct research with people, has a number of options: assume 'objectivity' as an ethic and then the research results become valid for those that share that frame of reference; outline the assumptions and framework for why that research might be valid, and engage in dialogue about these; and/or consider further an ethic of responsibility. The first option appears common and objectivity can be placed in inverted commas or parenthesis. 'Objectivity' can indicate an awareness of other alternative positions, but an 'as-if objective' position is chosen because it is relevant for the task at hand. The first option also captures "research community" considerations, but loses a research-as-action orientation. The second and third options seem more desirable and are explored below.

'Creating a space for research' is a partial step towards responsibility, where it is not the aim to change people's understandings *per se*, but to provide conditions where understandings can emerge (the so-called 'space'). This difference is perhaps subtle, but quite important. ToT-based research, for example, intrinsically tries to change people's understandings by assuming that 'knowledge' can, and will, be used by other people. If people are assumed to be self-determining or autonomous (Heron 1981), or structure-determined (from Maturana and Varela 1987), then the possibilities of a researcher *causing* change, by transferring knowledge, are non-existent. Instead, if understandings do change, then that can be considered as an emergent property of engaging in

a process. An assumption is that a space can indeed be created, where possibilities of changing understandings are triggered.

A further step towards responsibility comes from considering 'intervention'. It is megalomania to proclaim that researcher interventions *will* have an effect on other people: indeed a personal motivation for this research is a criticism that a lot of research has been irrelevant. However, this is not to say that a researcher does not intervene. 'Creating a space' is still an intervention, even if it does not try to change understandings directly. A concept of 'invitation' offers a way for approaching intervention (Russell and Ison 1993). An assumption is that if people are invited to do something, and they can say no, then responsibility for that action or process is shared. That is, an invitation acts as some sort of legitimation for intervention, because people have agreed to take part. Further elaboration on a concept of invitation is necessary, as an invitation is not free of the context in which it is embedded. The context includes aspects such as: who is doing the inviting, and are there any disadvantages incurred if the invitation is not accepted? These aspects need to be considered before an invitation can be considered as such.

In this thesis, I use a simple description of responsibility: to be a self-reflective researcher. The discussions of research-as-action; narrative; and facilitation testify to my attempts to be self-reflexive. Keeping a research journal is seen as part of that reflection. Writing this thesis in the first person is another part of my reflection, as are the 'reflections' sections at the end of each chapter. Responsibility as an *ethic* is an issue which deserves more attention than is possible in this thesis. Without this attention, it is difficult to claim that this thesis *is* responsible. The metaphor research-as-responsible gives coherence to the attempts to include my role as a researcher in the research.

If 'responsibility' replaces 'objectivity' as a research ethic, then evaluating research (whose values?) becomes a bit more problematic than appealing to the 'conventional' research criteria of "*internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity*" (Pretty 1994: 42). Evaluation is another activity appropriated by a research community, although AR tries to include *participant's* evaluations through the 'reflection on action' stage. Three sets of criteria contribute to developing guidelines for how this research can be evaluated by others in the same research community. These three sets of criteria are 'trustworthiness' (Pretty 1994), 'discourse validity' (Gregory and Romm 1994), and 'explicit frameworks' (Checkland 1991).

'Trustworthiness' criteria are based on the work of Guba and Lincoln (1989). Petty (1994: 43) suggests 12 criteria to enhance trustworthiness:

- Prolonged and/or intensive engagement of various actors;
- Persistent and parallel observation;
- Triangulation of sources, methods and investigators;
- Analysis and expression of difference;
- Negative case analysis;
- Peer checking;
- Participant checking;
- Reports with working hypotheses, contextual descriptions and visualisations;
- Parallel investigations and team communications;
- Reflexive journals;
- Inquiry audit; and
- Impact on stakeholders' capacity to know and act.

The trustworthiness criteria are presented as alternatives to the 'conventional' research criteria listed above. Some of these criteria are misleading, such as "triangulation". because of connotations on 'convergence on truth' [although Petty's explanation includes triangulation "*...(to) increase the range of different peoples' realities encountered*" (p44), which appears close to the aim of 'appreciating diverse understandings']. The trustworthiness criteria also appear to include some of Guba and Lincoln's (1989) criteria relating to authenticity: how fair and explicit the constructs of participants are dealt with.

Gregory and Romm (1994: 8) work from Habermas' discourse validity checks, and propose criteria to guide self-reflective facilitators. As such, these authors have come close to talking about responsibility in the terms addressed in this section, as have others in the 'Critical Systems' school such as Ulrich (1993). Gregory and Romm's four criteria for the validity of a statement are:

- do you understand what is being said?;
- is the speaker sincere?;
- is the speaker's point acceptable to you?; and
- do you agree with the speaker's use of information and/or experiences?

Gregory and Romm are careful to "avoid the impression that finally there [is] a 'right', 'acceptable', (and) 'true' way of seeing things that could somehow be 'reached' through discussion" (*ibid.*, p8). Their criteria miss 'relationship building' as being important and the reference to other people's experiences is very loose: can someone access another's experiences? However, these criteria emphasise a process of listening to and acknowledging other people's positions and hence can enhance efforts for researchers to be responsible.

The third criterion comes from Checkland (1991). Frameworks for research must be explicit, which seems based on a simple notion of responsibility as an ability to give an account of why statements are made. He writes, with respect to AR:

"... it is precisely the explicit methodological framework, declared in advance by the action researcher, which enables that researcher to justify what he or she says, thus beginning the process of developing a legitimate rigorous alternative to positivistic research" (ibid., p11).

The need to declare a framework is also linked to the need to define what counts as learning (*ibid.*, p7). In terms of this research, 'learning' could be defined as an ability to appreciate different metaphors. The attempt to be as explicit as possible about assumptions and ideas is laudable, though not possible in the terms that Checkland uses. Any set of ideas that could be called 'a framework' *evolves* through the research, especially through reflecting on fieldwork and writing a thesis. However, the criterion is a reminder to be explicit about assumptions and ideas and suggests *documenting changes*. Considering different metaphors of research attempts to make explicit certain assumptions carried through the research.

In order to evaluate whether this research outlined in the thesis is responsible, I propose the following criteria which combine aspects of trustworthiness, discourse validity and explicitness (Table 3.1). These criteria do not include those of 'co-researchers', which is an obvious shortcoming. However, since they are excluded from writing this thesis, then I take sole responsibility as a narrator. At one level, these criteria are my suggestions for how I want this thesis to be evaluated. However, I offer them to acknowledge that I consider research-as-responsible to be an important metaphor for reflecting on how we are conducting research.

Table 3.1 My criteria for evaluating responsible research

Criteria for responsibility (evidence of)	How it can contribute to responsibility	Indicators
Self reflection	* being aware of ideas, assumptions and alternatives	* research journal * document changes in ideas
Engagement in a research community	* by a 'dialogue' with other researchers; * by contributing to a research community	* collaboration * peer review * conferences
Adequate use of available resources	* being 'accountable'	* coherence and plausibility of thesis argument * use of time
Immersion in context	* by a prolonged time with people in context * through relationship building	* a 'rich' picture of that context * research is relevant to that context
Rigour	* by substantiating statements	* quoting relevant literature and sources of material
Sincerity	* 'valuing' other people * consistency to aims of working with people	* writing in the first person * learning described * developing appropriate skills

3.3 Researcher-facilitator, researcher-narrator and co-researchers: people involved in this research

Action, narration, facilitation, and responsibility are metaphors that give coherence to attempts to research with people. I could have considered other metaphors, but this is outside the scope of the present research. In light of the discussed metaphors, the roles of different people in this research are considered.

I assume two main roles in the research: researcher-narrator, and researcher-facilitator. A PhD does not allow other people to assume roles of researcher-narrators, even though there is no indication that they desire this role. As a consequence, all the material in this thesis represents my interpretations, for which I accept responsibility. At times, particularly when I discuss the metaphors of countrysides, my narrative does not use 'I' or 'my' as often: this is stylistic, as the use of 'I' can become monotonous. A style 'as-if' detached may be useful at times, as long as it is embedded within a narrative where roles are explicitly recognised. The researcher-facilitator role involves initiating and creating a space for research, and taking responsibility for the research 'activities'. At any one time, I have either or both of these research roles.

Other people involved in the research are assigned a role of 'co-researcher', assuming they have accepted an invitation to be involved. This role does not imply that they consider themselves *as* co-researchers, or that they are in any way responsible for what is reported in this thesis. Their 'title' also does not assume that this research *is* co-research. In the first instance, their title reflects my desire to move away from seeing people as research users or research subjects.

Allocating roles embodies the research metaphors which I claim are consistent with researching *with* people. The title 'researcher' is directly linked to who takes responsibility for what actions. In joint activities, the title co-researcher is used. By assuming two different roles (narrator and facilitator), I am creating two different strands for this research. This will become apparent after the next section.

All roles and actions are embedded in a context. In Chapter 1, I outlined the research context as *how future countrysides can come about*. The research context needs to be modified by incorporating my position as a researcher. That is, part of the research context includes a researcher context.

3.4 Research contexts and researcher contexts

An implication of recognising my position as a researcher is to recognise that I am also included in the research context. Viewing the research context as something external is common as, for example, shown by the advice to enter, or get inside, an organisation (Morgan 1993). One way of including a researcher is to say that she "constructs a researching system" (cf. McClintock and Ison 1994a). This does not explicitly include the interests of 'co-

researchers'. My experience in this research was that there was a *negotiation* between my interests (plus supervisors) and the interests of potential co-researchers. This negotiation revolved around extending and accepting invitations. Other factors were also important, such as the institutional settings for the research. The way I have chosen to include myself as a researcher is to distinguish between a *research* and *researcher* context.

I propose that *researcher* context can include the following aspects: her interests, her past experiences with research, the traditions from which the research arises, the research communities to which she belongs, her awareness of epistemology and the assumptions that she is making in the research, her ability to reflect on these assumptions, her familiarity with contexts experienced by co-researchers, and the institutional settings for the research. The list is not exhaustive, and aspects can be added or deleted from it. Doubtlessly, the aspects overlap, and an interesting diversion would be to consider relationships between these aspects. I do not intend to describe each of these aspects, as this thesis would then read like an autobiography rather than as a research narrative. I also recognise that I am using a singular 'researcher', when at times it might be appropriate to talk of a plural 'researchers'.

The research context includes the people involved and the topic chosen. Naming a topic can suggest relevant 'stakeholders', and stakeholders in turn can suggest relevant topics. I have pictured this process as a *negotiation* between people's interests. The co-researchers are the farming families and members of FWAG, and the topic is future countrysides. Both are described in Chapter 1, although an extension of my argument would be to describe the contexts of people involved in similar terms to the researcher context. Such an extension may support my distinction between a diverse stakeholder and an institutional context.

Research context, researcher context and roles of the researcher are shown diagrammatically (Figure 3.1). I use this figure again when I discuss a research approach that explicitly uses metaphors (Chapter 10). For now, the important thing to note is the two strands of research implied by assuming roles of narrator and facilitator. Both strands are explicit about the position of the researcher and which metaphors are being used. In addition, both strands are relevant to researching *with* people.

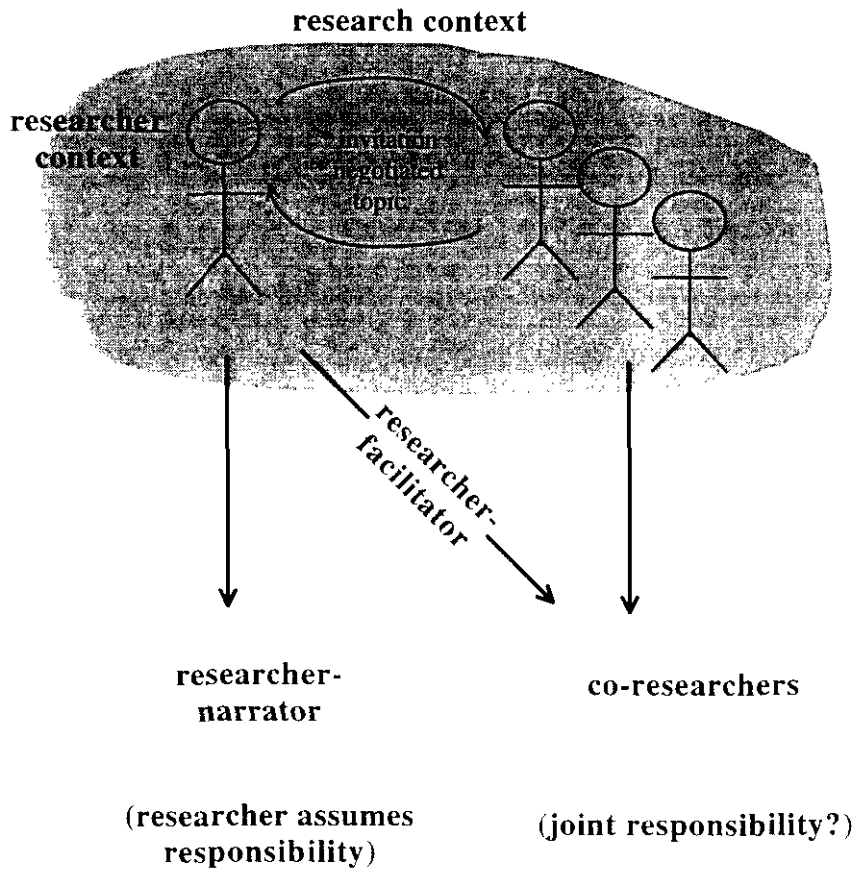


Figure 3.1 Roles of people in the research, as assumed and allocated by the researcher

3.5 Reflections on Chapter 3

Considering different metaphors enables a reflection on research and researcher roles. The four metaphors I have chosen seem powerful ways of discussing what researching with people might entail, and how to include the position of the researcher. In addition, my analysis implies that there can be different researcher roles; a point that proponents of researching *with* people, such as Heron (1996), do not make.

I passed up an opportunity to discuss my preferred metaphors of 'the PhD' by not expanding on the institutional settings of the researcher context. However, I think they are very important to a reflection on the research reported in this thesis. A PhD privileges certain research metaphors over others. A PhD as an apprenticeship, or a research training degree, is my preferred metaphor. This thesis describes some of my training and learning. One metaphor inappropriate to the epistemology that I espouse is a PhD as a contribution to 'knowledge'. I much prefer the entailments of an alternative metaphor: a PhD as a contribution to the activities of a research community. Other metaphors can capture different aspects of a PhD such as: a PhD as a journey.

The analysis of the research metaphors is perhaps too theoretical, in that I have not attempted to include how an awareness of these metaphors can inform *practice*. I have not tried to say 'this is how I act', or 'this is how I facilitate'. I address these issues directly in both Chapters 4 and 9. To a certain extent, however, the metaphors are grounded in my practice: they have emerged as appropriate ways to reflect on this research. Research-as-action also appears a way to dissolve a separation between theory and practice, an angle that I have not pursued.

One implication of not discussing my research practice in this chapter is that I may be masking my attempts to establish an explicit Action Research-style project. I discuss how AR contributes to a research-as-action metaphor, but not how difficult it is within the institutional settings of a PhD. I have incorporated some of the learning gained from these attempts into the other metaphors. For example, I discuss invitations as part of the metaphor research-as-responsible. Quite simply, if invitations to join an AR project are not accepted, then this has to be respected. My invitations were not accepted. I can reflect on different reasons for this, such as there being a lack of perceived benefits for being

involved and the severe time constraints that farming families are under. I still think that AR is desirable, and I like the emphasis on research cycles between reflection and action. Aspects of AR will inform any further research that I do. My exposure to AR enhanced the consideration of metaphors in this research.

This chapter is testimony to one of the ways metaphors can be used: to reflect on research itself. In this way, I have elaborated on my second response to the thesis question. In the next four chapters I discuss another way that metaphors can be used in research: as a way of understanding the research context.

Chapter 4 Bringing forth and analysing metaphors

metaphors provide a way to understand the research context and to appreciate a diversity of understandings

The next four chapters elaborate on how metaphors can be used to gain an understanding of the research context. In this chapter, I outline a process of *bringing forth* and analysing metaphors. If different metaphors can indicate different understandings, then the process of bringing forth is itself a way of appreciating a diversity of understandings about a context. Metaphors provide a means for *listening* to, and creating, different understandings. I have used methods of participant-observation, interviewing and workshops in order to bring forth metaphors in this research. I discuss in later chapters how the workshops allow co-researchers an opportunity to *jointly* bring forth and explore metaphors.

Once a metaphor is brought forth it can be explored. Metaphors have entailments, or implications, for seeing the research context *countrysides* in a certain way. I propose a framework for analysis that focuses on these entailments. The framework consists of considering what aspects of countrysides are revealed, and what aspects are concealed, by invoking a particular metaphor. Metaphors can also be juxtaposed, compared and clustered. Exploring metaphors allows judgements as to how they can contribute to understandings. I propose three judgements can clarify how metaphors can contribute to our understandings: *appropriate* metaphors that can give rise to new understandings, *disabling* metaphors that subtract from this ability, and *alternative* metaphors which I can suggest based on my understandings of the research context, literature and theory.

4.1 Bringing forth metaphors

I claim that metaphors are distinguished and created, rather than 'exist' independently of distinction or use. I propose that a process of *bringing forth* can explain how metaphors are distinguished. *Bringing forth* is found in Heidegger's writings (Heidegger 1962, 1977; Winograd and Flores 1987), although the process is also called *unconcealment*, *poiesis* and *presencing*. Heidegger uses bringing forth to explain how objects 'exist' and become

'present'. Objects, says Heidegger, do not exist independently from us as with an external and objective reality. Rather, objects are 'brought forth' when our concerned activity is interrupted. We are immersed, or *thrown*, in our concerned activity, and are not aware of anything else. Interruption is called break-down, which rather than being a negative activity represents a primary way that we relate to our 'Being-in-the-world' (what Heidegger calls 'Dasein'). Break-down and bringing forth, are therefore *creative* processes.

Bringing forth implies that we create and become aware of metaphors through some sort of 'interruption', or noticing something that we were previously unaware of¹. Based on my conclusions from Chapter 2, the interruption could be the words 'as' or 'is', or an unexpected description. Invoking bringing forth as a process has one very unfortunate and unintended implication: that a metaphor is seen as an 'object'. This is misleading, and I do not mean that metaphors are objects that can be instrumentally used as tools (cf. Watson 1995a), nor that we can in some way manipulate metaphors. Rather, I claim that metaphors need to be brought forth before we can explore them in a conscious manner.

In the explanation of the hermeneutic circle, I concluded that we can use metaphors even if we are not conscious of them or able to describe them. That is, using the language of Polanyi (1969), they can be tacit². A tacit metaphor cannot be explored in the sense that explicit metaphors can. I propose that metaphors have to be 'brought forth' before that can occur. This presents three complications:

- metaphors might be unable to be brought forth;
- there may be vested interest in keeping metaphors hidden; and
- bringing forth metaphors might be associated with a strategic use (McEachern 1992)

The first point is unavoidable. However, I argue in this chapter that the utility of metaphors comes from exploration, and how metaphors relate to the context,

¹ Note the similarities with the "evocative" theory of metaphors (section 2.3.1).

² Polanyi (1969) makes a distinction between tacit knowing and the unconscious, where the former is being aware but not able to describe what is known. When talking about awareness, or not, of metaphors, I prefer to conflate Polanyi's distinction.

rather than which particular metaphor it is. The second point brings up 'power' issues, which I address in Chapter 10. The third point refers to McEachern's (1992) association of a strategic use of metaphors with a *selective* use (by farmers in this case) to portray an acceptable 'identity'. However, bringing forth is fundamentally linked with purpose, so strategic or selective use is also unavoidable. An argument can be made that the complication is reduced if purposes and assumptions are explicit and, therefore, able to be challenged. Explicitness is desirable, and exploring metaphors may enhance the transparency of assumptions. The second and third complications appear to relate more to the context in which a metaphor is brought forth, and whether people are seen as 'threats' or not. This is one reason why I emphasise developing relationships; a point that I expand on in the methods section.

Heidegger (1977: 18) adds a further point that "...[we do] not have control over unconcealment itself". Bringing forth is not necessarily a deliberate action. Winograd and Flores (1987) reason that we can work towards bringing forth, by *training* to anticipate 'breakdown' or interruption to activities. However, a more interesting implication from Heidegger's point is that we cannot *determine* which metaphors are going to be brought forth. An emergence of metaphors can only be triggered: a position consistent with Maturana and Varela (1987) who claim that changes in behaviour can be triggered but not determined³.

Conceptualising a process of bringing forth metaphors is especially attractive for two reasons. Firstly, by assuming it is the researcher who is bringing forth metaphors, it includes an explicit recognition of the position of the researcher. A metaphor is linked to the person who brings it forth. I discuss shortly a question of 'who else can bring forth metaphors?'. Secondly, a process that makes metaphors explicit can be likened to processes of articulating and making understandings transparent. Articulating diverse understandings is an extension of my prior conclusions that metaphors give a means to listen to, and appreciate, diverse understandings.

Although anybody can, and arguably does, bring forth metaphors, I have only discussed the process in terms of 'a researcher'. By doing so, I am assuming the role 'researcher-narrator'. In Chapter 3, I called this role the first strand of

³ Winograd and Flores (1987) and Mingers (1995) also outline similarities between Heidegger's ontology and Maturana and Varela's 'biology of cognition'.

researching with people. I am also interested in metaphors that are jointly brought forth, which form the second strand. The difference between the strands is in who takes responsibility, and who ascribes the metaphors. At times it is difficult to distinguish sharply between a metaphor brought forth by a researcher, and a metaphor brought forth jointly. As I describe in the next section, bringing forth metaphors through conversations requires an intense relationship. The next three chapters also combine metaphors solely and jointly brought forth, but I assume responsibility because I analysed these metaphors and composed a narrative. I reserve the use of 'jointly bringing forth metaphors' specifically for some workshops which were designed to do that (Chapter 9).

In this section I have described a process of bringing forth metaphors, and discussed some of its implications. How metaphors of future countrysides can be brought forth, and what methods are appropriate, are the themes for the next section.

4.2 Methods of bringing forth metaphors

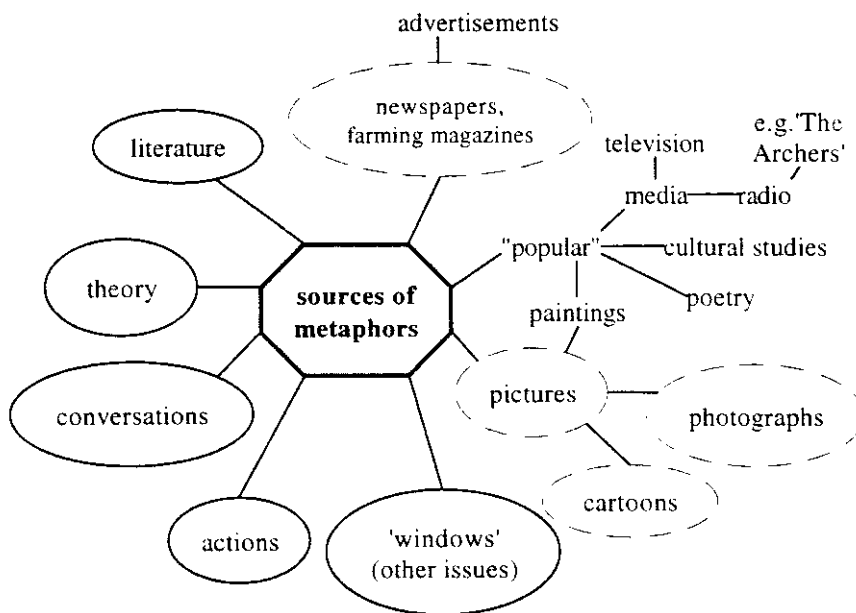
Metaphors can be generated endlessly just by juxtaposing a number of different words and putting an 'as' in the middle. But I might generate something like "cat-as-fish" which, although it might lead to interesting insights, might be irrelevant to considering how future countrysides come about. I probably would not be taken seriously by the farmers that I am trying to work with if I asked them to consider such a metaphor.

Instead, I propose that there are a number of distinct research domains that can act as a source for bringing forth metaphors. There are also a number of research methods that are appropriate, for different reasons, for exploring these domains. Research methods need to be suitable for use amongst diverse-stakeholder contexts (farming families and people involved in bringing forth countrysides) and institutional contexts (FWAG). The three methods I chose were: participant-observation, interviewing and workshops. Before I discuss the methods, I explore the sources of metaphors that I thought to be relevant and reasons behind the choice of methods.

4.2.1 SOURCES OF METAPHORS AND THE CHOICE OF METHODS

A number of research domains can provide a 'source' for bringing forth metaphors (Figure 4.1). Four of these domains were especially appropriate to my researcher and research contexts:

- literature;
- theoretical commitments;
- conversations with those involved in the context; and
- everyday activities of those involved.



Key

- circled sources: used in the research
- dotted circle: partially used, a domain for further research
- uncircled sources: not used

Figure 4.1 'Sources' of farming and countryside metaphors used in the research

Throughout the research period, a literature review was conducted⁴ to identify:

- previously brought forth metaphors of farming and countrysides;
- how these metaphors were analysed, if at all; and
- methods of bringing forth and using metaphors in research.

One of the early milestones for this research, was being able to structure a stand-alone draft of a literature review *in terms of* metaphors. This literature review has been incorporated into the following three chapters.

In Chapter 2, I outlined how theory can act as a source of metaphors. I made special reference to *Systems* and epistemological frameworks as sources of metaphors. I only want to add one point to that discussion, that metaphors previously brought forth and analysed can act themselves as sources for other metaphors. For example, Armson and Ison (1995) describe how the desirable entailments of one metaphor of an academic department, a 'polo mint', can generate new metaphors that *enhance*, or emphasise, these entailments.

The third and fourth domains concern direct interactions with those concerned with bringing-about future countrysides. Observing and participating in everyday activities is one source of metaphors. The other source is through *conversations*, which includes both the stories that people tell about their experiences and also their ways of describing countrysides⁵. Concentrating on people's stories also emphasised the conditions needed to promote story-telling, such as trust, safety and respect. The stories that I listened to in the research related to:

- everyday activities;
- perceptions of countrysides;
- issues of concern; and
- various 'windows' that embody, and thus reveal, metaphors of countrysides.

⁴ I concur with Patton (1990) that it is inappropriate to *only* conduct a literature review at the start of research.

⁵ During fieldwork I generally used the expression 'ways of describing' rather than 'metaphor', as the latter appears 'too academic'. 'Image' is another word that can be used instead of metaphor. The alternative words and expressions are valid in light of the discussion on language in which I claimed that there was no way of describing metaphor except by using metaphors.

The windows that I chose included FWAG's operations and policy issues such as Set-aside and Countryside Stewardship; I describe these in the following chapters. I use the metaphor of a 'window', through which an issue can be directly or indirectly viewed, for a lack of an alternative metaphor. I describe in Chapter 8 how other people have used a metaphor of windows.

I chose three methods as appropriate for accessing the domains of conversation and everyday activity: participant-observation, interviewing, and workshops. The selection of these methods was initially based on what I thought was needed to establish an AR-style project, and also the attempts by Kersten (1995) to create a dialogue between farmers and researchers. However, the methods chosen enabled:

- a contextualisation of this researcher;
- working by invitation;
- active listening to expressed metaphors, and an appreciation of different understandings;
- active listening to people's stories and how they make sense of their day-to-day activities;
- relationship-building;
- a recording of conversations and observations;
- triggering different understandings; and
- a reflection on 'role(s) of the researcher'.

Each of the 'features' identified are based on some strong assumptions (Table 4.1). The rest of this section elaborates on some of the contents of this table.

Two types of conversations can be distinguished: informal (unstructured) and structured conversation. Both were used at different times in this research and they overlapped. Informal conversations were mainly used in participant-observation phases, and structured conversations during the interviewing phases. Where possible, and with permission, conversations were recorded by tape. Field notes were also taken for activities and conversations that could not

be recorded. Tapes were transcribed⁶ and the transcriptions organised into themes. Taping, transcribing and analysing conversations allowed:

- a confirmation of explicit metaphors identified during conversations;
- bringing forth implicit metaphors, that is, the metaphors unnoticed during the conversation itself;
- familiarisation with discourses used and a selection of quotes;
- a reflection on whether space for understandings to emerge was being created or not.

Table 4.1 Features of methods chosen to bring forth metaphors

Features highlighted	Assumptions
Contextualising researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * unfamiliar context * different discourse
Working by invitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * cannot bring forth metaphors with uninterested people
Active listening to metaphors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * some metaphors are directly expressed * can appreciate different understandings
Active listening to stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * stories are based on metaphors
Building relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * needed for long-term research, and indeed for researching <i>with</i> people * time is available and institutional settings are conducive * needed to bring forth implicit metaphors
Recording conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * confirms explicit metaphors * allows reflection * can reveal implicit metaphors
Triggering different understandings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * methods are open ended
Reflections on role of researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * role needs to be explicit (see Chapter 3)

⁶ It is worth noting that there was about an 8:1 transcribing to interview ratio. in terms of time, that rarely is acknowledged.

Active listening involves probing responses with questions, and exploring meanings attributed to experiences rather than a recounting of events. This is not just asking 'why' questions, as this assumes there are single, rational explanations rather than a "myriad" of reasons (Patton 1990: 313-4). Active listening also involves examining when, and why, I made interventions in conversations at certain times. The Samaritans, an organisation who counsel people, make a common practice of analysing interventions. Active listening also means being aware of non-verbal 'cues', such as body language (Webber and Ison 1995), but this is difficult to check through audio or written records.

During fieldwork, one consequence of focusing on conversations and everyday activity was that a lot of the content related to technical issues of farming and conservation practices, such as: how to establish grasslands; what the world wheat prices were doing; and so on. At times, the technical issues acted as a window to certain metaphors of countrysides. Undoubtedly, an ability to discuss technical issues contributed to whether I was taken seriously or not. If I was interested in ways of working with farmers, but did not 'relate' to them, then the project would have been very difficult. I think that this ability also enhanced relationship building as did some personal attributes of being an Australian, a farmer's son, and a student. However, it meant that a lot of 'data' could not enter this thesis. Pankhurst (1992: 189) notes that:

"one page of the final draft might represent findings from more than 100 observed events, or at the other extreme, from the views incidentally expressed by one respondent. Different kinds and quality of data are merged together because of the need to present one picture".

Other data did not enter the thesis because it was repetitive or, in Strauss and Corbin's (1990) terms, the categories were "saturated".

Building relationships is at the core of the three methods chosen. All the methods require intense relationships with the co-researchers. This highlights an assumption that time is available, and that the institutional settings allow for such relationships to be built.

The three methods chosen are now outlined. They did not occur in a linear sequence, but rather iteratively, and as opportunities allowed (cf. Guba and Lincoln 1989).

4.2.2 PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION (PO)

In anthropology, participant-observation (PO) involves the researcher 'going native' so that he/she will be able to make observations and be able to interpret those observations not otherwise available (for example, Hammersley 1992). Peberdy (1993) outlines four positions of a PO researcher: complete participant, complete observer, participant as observer and observer as participant. The observer-as-participant is consistent with the metaphor of research-as-action. However, an observer-as-participant conceals that a researcher is free to leave that context, which can lead to a "now you're here, now you've gone" sort of response, which in turn detracts from the ability to share experiences (Patton 1990: 256, quoting from Joyce Keller).

Anthropologists use PO to build a rich description of the community in question. However, I chose PO on other grounds than 'describing people's realities'. PO was used to learn about UK farming and countrysides (contextualisation), which included becoming familiar with different discourses. PO was also an excellent chance to meet people. It gave rise to what Patton (1990) describes as 'chain or snowball interviewing', where further contacts came from pursuing these everyday activities. The contextualisation was not one-way since PO also gave an opportunity, over an extended period of time, for potential collaborators to explore my perspectives and what might be involved in a co-researching inquiry. Hence, because it was two way, PO was useful in a process of developing relationships.

PO allowed a chance to participate in everyday activities, and to *value* these by being involved. Co-researchers did not 'lose' time by being involved in research, and there were opportunities to 'help out' with everyday activities such as: catering at meetings, feeding livestock, and repairing broken water pipes. PO gave a pragmatic platform for exploring countrysides, as it was grounded in everyday activities.

In PO, there were chances for people to lead discussions, on what was important to them, more than would be obtained from an interview context in their office or home (see Kersten 1995). Quite often, comments were made on extra things that "popped-up" during the course of activities or walks. PO concentrated on informal, or unstructured conversation. Wherever possible, opportunities for talking with family members and staff were actively sort.

PO was used in two distinct communities. The first was through and with people associated with FWAG. This involved visiting five FWAG groups, which were considered diverse in context and approach. Letters of introduction were prepared by both myself and the national technical adviser in FWAG. Participation was usually in terms of being with the FWAG adviser as s/he went about their activities (advising), and also attending and participating in 'FWAG events'. Participation was designed to give both a better understanding of what FWAG was about in these counties, and also as an introduction to a network of conversations. The details of the PO phases are presented in Table 4.2. The second use of PO was with five farming families close to St Neots (which encompassed two counties, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire). This involved working on each farm for a day and attempting to speak with as many members of the family (excluding young children), and workers, as possible. This second phase of PO preceded invitations to the 'metaphor workshops' (Chapter 9). In both cases, conversations were recorded or noted to allow reflection, as described previously.

Table 4.2 also provides details of the sources of quotes reported in this thesis. A code [c1] for example, represents a conversation with a person in county c (which in this case, is Bedfordshire). Conversations are ordered chronologically. Where it adds to understanding, an additional explanation of 'FWAG adviser', or 'farmer' is inserted into the text. This code helps to both maintain confidentiality, and show which statements are linked to a particular person.

Two written reports "Spending time with FWAG" and "Strategic questions for FWAG" were prepared based on the first PO phase. These reports aimed to 'mirror' understandings, and trigger metaphors. The first was distributed mainly to FWAG advisers and committee members. This led to an interviewing phase (described below). The second report was intended to contribute to FWAG's strategic review process. These reports did not seem to trigger directly any further metaphors, although some co-researchers indicated that they would not be as willing to talk for a second (or third) time if I did not indicate what I was getting out of it. The reports were designed to trigger metaphors, although they relied on a medium of writing. Kersten (1995) used audio tapes as a more creative medium. I tried to use cartoons and pictures more in later reports, in order to change the medium slightly.

Table 4.2 Details of participant-observation in this research

Community	Location	Numbers of participants		Time	Events					
		primary; more than 2 hours interaction	other		shows	farm walks	AGM	farm visits (with advisers)	office	conference, evening meetings
FWAG										
a	National	4	2	1 day	1		1		1	1
b	Suffolk	2	4	2 days	1	1		2		
c	Beds	1	4	1 day	1			2	1	
d	Cornwall	10	-	5 days	1	1		8		1
e	Bucks	11	3	various		1	1			3*
f	Cambs.	1	-	various	1	1				2

Farming families				
i	Beds & Cambs.	11	3	1 day at 5 farms

* including a presentation that I gave on 'Landcare in Australia'.

4.2.3 INTERVIEWING

Interviews-as-data collection is a dominant metaphor used in the social sciences. This fits into a linear view of research, as collecting data, analysing, then making policy recommendations. However, interviews can be seen as interventions in people's lives (Patton 1990: 353). I used three other metaphors of interviewing, that were also consistent with the aims of using PO:

- interviews-as-developing relationships;
- interviews-as-active listening; and
- interviews-as-enabling stories.

All three depend on *valuing* people. An interview can contribute to developing relationships when it is seen as part of a longer term process, rather than a discrete event. For example, I used interviews as part of extending an invitation to workshops. Dowsett (1986) also draws attention to the interaction apparent in interviews. It is this interaction that makes it possible for interviews to be more than data collection. Dowsett (1986) claims that an interview is also a privileged access to somebody's life, and indeed can change the interviewer's life (such as through listening to the stories of personal tragedies).

Active listening encompasses *listening*, which is described by Patton (1990) as a privilege. Dowsett (1986: 54) explains that:

"... we do not listen very well in ordinary conversation. Listening is a hard skill to develop. In an interview you're two people at once - you're listening and participating in that conversation. You're also monitoring the conversation, making sure that the overall direction of the interview is heading where you want it to go".

An interview has been linked to story-telling and narrative (Webber 1993; Polkinghorne 1988), and hence to revealing metaphors. Polkinghorne (1988, p182-3), in the context of family therapy, shows how interviews can enable stories and meaning:

"The therapist helps clients articulate and bring to language and awareness the narratives they have developed to give meanings to their lives. The clients are then able to examine and reflect on the themes

they are using to organise their lives... (which) can release people from the control of past interpretations they have attached to events and open up the possibility of renewal and freedom for change".

Polkinghorne further highlights the desirability of giving control and ownership to interviewees (ibid., p128; p164).

The type of interview reflects both different epistemological positions and different aims for interviewing. Patton (1990: 280) outlines four types of qualitative interviews: informal conversation, general interview guide, standardised open-ended interview, and closed, fixed response interviews. Informal conversation is pictured as having some positive attributes: most questions flow from the context, they are very responsive and individualised, and it is 'concrete'. However, they were seen as hard to analyse, and that there would be a marked 'interviewer effect' if more than one interviewer was used. The interview guide refers to an interview in which an outline of the topic and issues are specified in advance. This allows the same questions or issues to be explored, but is flexible in that an interviewer decides which questions are appropriate. Standardised open-ended interviews use the same wording and style of questions determined in advance. Fixed response interviews are typical of 'choose a response from those listed', used in quantitative interviews and questionnaires (see Patton 1990: 288-9, Table 7.1).

Two other types of interview, the *in-depth interview* (Webber 1993; Polkinghorne 1988), and the *semi-structured interview* (SSI) (Dowsett 1986) influenced my choice of interview type. SSIs fall between informal conversations and interview-guide approaches. The 'structuring' comes from pursuing themes, and semi-structured refers to having 'themes of interest', but no set questions to ask. SSIs enable stories that relate to these themes of interest. For these reasons, I chose SSIs.

The distinction between the informal conversations held during the PO phase, and the SSIs was sometimes rather slight. For example, SSIs were often mixed with walking around farms, an activity also apparent in PO. SSIs were always conducted in the context of the people concerned (whether that be a farm, or an office). The main distinction however, was SSIs had a purpose of exploring themes relating to countrysides (my agenda) rather than themes that emerged from the context (even though these may not be different). For consistency, unstructured conversations held through the PO phase were not considered as

interviews, even though the acts of initiating, recording and reflecting on discussions qualified them as interviews.

Polkinghorne (1988: 164) states that it is important to build "... a context in which the interviewee feels less need to tell stories that are primarily designed to present the self in socially valued images". Dowsett (1986) relates this concern to the skill of the interviewer- to make sure the interviewee is not just putting on a show. However, Humphreys (1990) presents a compelling argument, that 'everything is said by someone to someone' (cf. Maturana 1988), and there is no chance of a 'pure' response. Humphreys instead emphasised interaction and context. This supports the need for relationship building and active listening in interviewing.

Interviews initially arose from possibilities presented from PO. I used interviews in five phases (Table 4.3):

- 1) conducting SSIs with FWAG advisers and members in three counties, following my reports. These interviews were not designed to lead to further research action, as one of the findings from the PO phase was that it was logistically impossible to work with too many groups;
- 2) conducting SSIs with the two groups that were receptive to further research action. Here SSIs were used explicitly as part of a process of building relationships, as described above. In one county, interviewees were invited to a workshop. This led to the third use;
- 3) conducting 'follow-up' SSIs with workshop participants to reflect on experiences and understandings from the workshops. Some of these SSIs were conducted by telephone;
- 4) conducting SSIs with a FWAG adviser, following his invitations to me to participate in two topics of interest: *Set-aside* (a policy) and *Nutrient-balancing* (a tool for debating the management of nutrients and fertilisers). I conducted some follow-up SSIs by telephone for the first topic, following two workshops which were jointly facilitated. For the second topic, we conducted some SSIs jointly with some farmers (male) who were potentially interested in nutrient-balancing. Neither of these topics continued as longer term research, but they did act as different 'windows' in which to view metaphors of farming and countrysides; and

5) conducting SSIs to explore the diversity of organisations, and their espoused metaphors, at The 1995 Royal Agricultural Show. Promotional leaflets had flagged the show as having two "new" features: exhibitions of *farming and the countryside* and *people in the countryside*. This effectively concentrated many organisations that wished to influence farming and countryside into one site, and it enabled access to a large number of organisations in a short space of time (4 days). Where possible, I interviewed two members from each organisation about their responses to the show and their perceptions of UK countryside. Approaching people was more difficult than other phases of SSIs, which suggests that there was a different type of relationship involved.

Interviews varied widely in length, but on average were about 2 hours. Conducting interviews in the first three phases was also often aided by diagramming techniques. Diagrams allow interviewees to obtain an overall picture of a theme, and also how they wanted to structure their stories. Diagrams were also used in the workshops, as a part of experiential exploration. Some of the diagrams are presented in the following chapters.

Table 4.3 Details of interviews conducted in this research

Phase	Location	Purpose of interviews	numbers of people interviewed
1	i) National FWAG - [a] ii) Suffolk - [b] iii) Beds. - [c]	* follow-up reports * confirm expressed metaphors	i) 2 ii) 2 iii) 1
2	i) Cornwall - [d] ii) Bucks. - [e]	* invitation to longer-term research	i) 4 ii) 6
3	see details of workshops (section 4.2.4)	* follow up from workshops	see details of workshops
4	Cambs. - [g]	* explore perceptions of, and interests in, nutrient balancing	4 [g2-g5]
5	The Royal Show	* explore metaphors used by organisations	taped =7; noted =14 [j1-j21]

4.2.4 WORKSHOPS

Workshops were the third method chosen to bring forth and explore metaphors. However, not all the workshops had this as their primary aim. Initial workshops were also used to explore experientially issues raised from PO and interviewing. A workshop was seen as a way to form a co-researching group, especially as there is a social bonding side to a workshop, which in turn underlies a component of informal learning. Workshops also can trigger an emergence of understandings, through the interaction of different perspectives.

Table 4.4 presents details of the workshops as part of this research. A total of six workshops were conducted, with two workshops in each of three situations. Two workshops were conducted in Buckinghamshire as part of attempts to establish co-researching activities, two workshops exploring an issue of *set-aside* (co-facilitated with the FWAG adviser), and two 'metaphor workshops' which aimed to jointly bring forth and explore metaphors in an explicit manner. These metaphor workshops are described in Chapter 9. Five of these workshops involved mainly farmer participants, and the other involved FWAG advisers (workshop 5). The first workshop in Buckinghamshire was facilitated with an assistant, and the third and fourth workshops were co-designed and co-facilitated with the local FWAG adviser. Other workshops were conducted with the author as sole facilitator.

Table 4.4 Details of workshops conducted in this research

Workshop	Location	Time	Aim	Numbers of Participants	Numbers invited
1	Bucks (Wendover library)	Jan., 1995	explore co-researching	4 plus 2 facilitators	6
2	Bucks (Wendover library)	Feb. 1995	(as above)	2 plus 1 facilitator	8
3	Cambs. (farmer's home)	April 1995	explore set-aside options	6 plus 2 facilitators	?
4	Cambs. (farmer's office)	April 1995	(as above)	9 plus 2 facilitators	?
5	OU campus	Nov., 1995	explore metaphors	5 plus 1 facilitator	44, by letter
6	Beds/Cambs. (farmer's office)	Nov., 1995	(as above)	6 plus 1 facilitator	12 (5 farming families)

Invitations to workshops flowed from the PO and SSI phases. The numbers of participants were sometimes lower than I considered desirable (6-12 people). I found it difficult to arrange a time when people could attend, especially to try to avoid the busy times of the year (August-October). Quite a few farmers could not attend on the dates chosen, and some people declined on the actual day of the workshops because of farming or family circumstances. Low numbers did not detract from the aims of the workshops and they enabled an opportunity to build up workshop facilitation skills, something previously lacking. Workshops have been successfully used in academic and organisational contexts. They were difficult to run within a context of diverse stakeholders, especially with busy, self-employed farming families. Having said that, the workshop within an institutional context of FWAG was also difficult to organise and run.

Workshop designs reflected the purposes of the workshops, but all designs emerged from considering one major question: 'what could a facilitator do in order to create a space for dialogue, and hence trigger *emergence through dialogue*?'. Discussions were held with experienced facilitators, and books of techniques reviewed (such as van Gundy 1988). Techniques were short-listed that could take 'metaphors' into account, and techniques that explicitly consider metaphors are outlined in Chapter 9. Ground rules were also considered in order to create a dialogue rather than a debate (Isaacs 1992; Roth *et al.* 1992; Kersten 1995). One very simple suggestion was to propose that there was "no right or wrong", which would avoid alienating people who did not hold these "right" views.

In chapter 9, I elaborate on the workshop designs, and review the effectiveness of the activities and techniques. All three methods can contribute to bringing forth metaphors. In the next section, I consider how a metaphor can be explored after it has been brought forth.

4.3 A framework for exploring metaphors

The novelty of generating metaphors endlessly would soon wear off, and all that would be left is a big list with very little scope for learning! Some indirect opportunities for learning might arise as, given the previous discussion, bringing forth metaphors requires immersion and interactions in various research domains. However, I am interested in how a metaphor can be explored directly, and how this can trigger new understandings.

One possibility is simply to ask people, or ask myself as a researcher, the question 'how about this metaphor?'. In certain cases, this may be sufficient to trigger a discussion about what the metaphor means, to different people, in a certain context. Learning points can arise from the discussion, and the metaphor acts as some sort of catalyst for the discussion. Morgan (1986; 1993) asks a similar sort of question in an organisational context: "*what if you considered your organisation as ... [Y]*", where Y represents different images such as machines, organisms, brains, cultures, and so on. This question constitutes an invitation to consider *your* particular organisation in this way and possibly to trigger a discussion about aspects of the organisation perhaps not previously considered. If a certain metaphor did not trigger a discussion, then another metaphor can be tried as not all metaphors are assumed to be relevant in a certain context. Morgan's use of the word *if* is quite important as other possible metaphors are implicitly recognised. Morgan then goes on to look at the advantages and disadvantages of *using* a particular metaphor to describe a context. Simple questions such as 'how about it?' or 'what if...?' are useful, but I am looking for something more rigorous.

Other possibilities come from the theories as to how metaphors work (see Chapter 2). Metaphors-as-comparisons, for example, implies that a metaphor can be explored by seeing which features are shared, and not shared, between the two concepts (X and Y) in the metaphor. Metaphors-as-substitutions implies that exploration would proceed until the metaphor is explained away and the core meaning is explicit. Metaphors-as-evocative is an interesting case as it implies either that 'the shock' be analysed, possibly in terms of why it is a shock, or that exploring a metaphor is pointless anyway as it either produces a shock or it does not. Under this theory, a metaphor can be seen as novel precisely because it is unexpected and unexplored.

Before using these theories to explore a metaphor, Way's (1994) conclusion that none of these theories can account for the richness in metaphors needs to be considered. In this section I propose an alternative framework to analyse metaphors. To do so, my starting point is taken to be a metaphor's "entailments". Coyne (1995: 63) confirms this possibility: "*rather than focus on individual terms [in a metaphor] we can inspect the entailments*". To which I add: '*in a certain context*'.

Entailments can be considered as implications of seeing X-as-Y. These implications drive the argument that a metaphor creates 'realities'. These

implications also provide a bridge between 'ways of thinking' and 'action' (even if these are falsely divided in the first place - see Shotter 1993: 99). The entailments also seem to link a 'concept' and a 'process of restructuring'. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 9) claim a metaphor's entailments are 'systematic': "*metaphorical entailments can characterise a coherent system of metaphorical concepts*" (emphasis added). Krippendorff (1993: 5) adds that metaphors are: "*far from ambitious and vague. Their entailments can be traced with considerable certainty and in as much detail as desirable...*". Rather than comparing features of two domains, or considering an emotional effect of a metaphor, a productive and rigorous way of looking at metaphors could be to examine a metaphor's entailments.

The framework that I propose to explore a metaphor is: '*If X is Y, then what aspects of the context are revealed, and what aspects are concealed?*'. Processes of revealing and concealing are discussed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 10): "*the very systemacity that allows us to comprehend one aspect of a concept in terms of another... will necessarily hide other aspects of a concept... that are inconsistent with that metaphor*". They use an example of considering an argument as a war, which reveals aspects of *attack* and *defend*, but then conceals *co-operation* as well as other aspects of a conversation. "Reveal" is used in the sense of focusing on, or highlighting, certain aspects. "Conceal" is described as "*losing sight of [certain] aspects*" (*ibid.*, p10). An alternative description of revealing and concealing is implied by Heidegger (1977): revealing is an *awareness* and a disruption to concerned activity, and concealing is *unawareness*⁷.

Conceptualising a metaphor 'revealing and concealing' different aspects is consistent with using bringing forth to explain how metaphors are distinguished. Different people will probably ascribe different revealed and concealed aspects, hence these differences can provide sites for learning. The idea that aspects can be concealed, or hidden, by using a metaphor can encourage reflection on aspects of a context that might be taken-for-granted.

⁷ Heidegger's (1962) example of hammering is often used to explain how an object, such as a hammer, becomes present by a 'breakdown' to concerned activity. I propose that considering *both* revealing and concealing at the same time is to consider *a change* in concerned activity. That is, hammering is one activity, and the breakdown 'looking at the hammer' is another activity. By looking at a hammer, other aspects are *not* present. My proposal that concealing indicates a change of activities is not important to the present discussion of a framework to explore metaphors, except that it acts as a site for further reflecting on 'bringing forth'.

Further, links to 'bringing forth' implies that *which* aspects are revealed or concealed are not controllable. Morgan's (1986) framework of 'advantages and disadvantages of metaphors' does not explicitly recognise the possibility of hidden aspects nor a process of how the metaphor is distinguished in the first place. Hence I claim that 'revealing and concealing' is a rich framework to explore metaphors with.

In operational terms, exploring a metaphor for revealed and concealed aspects can be similar to asking: 'what does X-as-Y highlight (imply)' and 'what does it hide (not imply)?'. Asking these questions leads to one difficulty, in that it is relatively "easy" to follow through what a metaphor highlights, but it is sometimes difficult to imagine what a metaphor does not highlight. In practice, it seems that the only way this can be done is to "juxtapose metaphors" and see if aspects revealed by other metaphors are also revealed by a metaphor in question. Hence exploring metaphors may not be effective if the exploration is restricted to only one or a few metaphors. Considering a range of metaphors is therefore desirable. Exploring more than one metaphor is also implied by the use of the word *if*.

Using this framework also begs the question 'revealed and concealed for and by whom?'. The question is similar to 'who is a metaphor brought forth by?' that I answered previously. Again, in the first instance I take responsibility for ascribing revealed and concealed aspects.

One further point that comes from the framework is that there is no justification to assume that there is a balance between the number or qualities of aspects revealed and concealed. Indeed an imbalance can explain why certain metaphors are 'appropriate' or 'disabling' in a certain context. Exploring a metaphor in terms of what aspects are revealed and concealed provides a basis in which to make judgements about *using* metaphors in a certain context. I discuss these judgements shortly. Before I do so, two issues require attention:

- can a number of metaphors be explored at the same time; and
- can metaphors be explored *individually* as the framework implies?

I address these two issues in the following sections.

4.3.1 JUXTAPOSING, COMPARING AND CLUSTERING METAPHORS

I have already indicated that juxtaposing metaphors might be necessary so that concealed aspects of a metaphor can be ascribed. Juxtaposing metaphors might also provide a further site for learning: are there any relationships between metaphors? Relationships can be shown visually, which implies that some form of diagramming may be a useful accompaniment to the framework. Diagramming allows a number of metaphors to be shown at the same time.

A different way of working with a number of metaphors is to *compare* metaphors in terms of what aspects are revealed and concealed by each metaphor. This is perhaps an unnecessary formalisation of juxtaposing metaphors, and it brings with it the same connotations as the comparison theory of how a metaphor works.

A third way of dealing with a number of metaphors is to cluster them into some sort of *categories*. Lakoff (1987) claims that we categorise all of the time. Two important stipulations are necessary before clustering is accepted as a way of dealing with a large number of metaphors: the clusters are not 'true' or rigid, and that metaphors are not then associated with a mis-categorisation (cf. Coyne 1995). If these stipulations are not observed, then having categories defeats the point of exploring metaphors and trying to appreciate a diversity in understandings.

I consider juxtaposing and clustering to be useful ways of dealing with a number of metaphors.

4.3.2 NESTS OF METAPHORS

The emphasis on individual metaphors can be questioned. Proposing relationships between metaphors might indicate that several metaphors are very closely linked. Linkage might arise from four mechanisms:

- bringing forth occurs in a context, and the context can 'entertain' many possible metaphors. Some of these can be similar;
- bringing forth does not give a 'pure' metaphor that is devoid of the context in which it was brought forth, and the context includes other 'pre-brought forth' metaphors;

- we use the same assumptions and understandings when bringing forth metaphors, and hence it may indeed be hard to *separate* them; and
- linked metaphors *share* entailments (Schön 1963; Watson 1995a).

If metaphors can be considered as linked, then there is some support for the idea that clustering is a valid procedure for handling large numbers of metaphors. A further case can be made that looking for combinations of metaphors might be useful. Metaphors can co-exist and contradict, and Krippendorff (1993: 14) claims: "... *metaphors are viable relative to each other... and that they were coherent within possibly quite different constructions of reality*". Considering which combinations of metaphors co-exist, and which contradict is another way that metaphors can be explored. I consider this extra exploration as outside the scope of the thesis, especially as it could be quite messy.

A different image can be used to describe a possible linkage between metaphors: that of a 'nest'. A nest could alternatively be described as a *web*, *layer*, or even a *contingency* of metaphors. I invoke these sorts of images rather than 'a cluster' in order to cater for the possibility that linked metaphors are *not* about the same concept 'X'. I have indirectly suggested that metaphors can be nested in an earlier discussion. I claimed that certain issues can act as 'windows' into countrysides, as the issues *embody* these metaphors. I gave two examples of windows in this research: FWAG as an institution, and an agricultural policy 'set-aside'. In later chapters I elaborate just which metaphors of countrysides these embody. These windows suggest that by bringing forth a metaphor of (say) FWAG, I am indirectly *bringing with it*⁸ a host of other metaphors about different concepts. It just happens that one of the other concepts that I am interested in is countrysides, so I ignore the others.

Rather than question the focus on individual metaphors, it may be more fruitful to look for what issues embody the concept 'X' that is of interest. I claim that by bringing forth and exploring metaphors I am still treating them as individual metaphors, but I acknowledge that 'nests' of metaphors can enhance that exploration. This claim will become clearer through the discussion of farming and FWAG 'windows' (Chapters 6 and 7).

⁸ I could also phrase this: 'revealed and concealed aspects *can be other metaphors*'.

4.4 Judgements about metaphors in a context: appropriate, disabling and alternative metaphors

Exploring metaphors enables judgements as to what understandings they give to a certain research context. I propose three judgements clarify how metaphors can contribute to our understandings:

- are metaphors appropriate and can they give rise to new understandings?;
- are metaphors disabling and even harmful?; and
- what are some alternative metaphors?

Coyne (1995: 296) claims that "*the appropriateness of any metaphor depends on the context. The pragmatic view of metaphors asks 'is this metaphor enabling in this situation?'*" (quotation marks added). An enabling metaphor, then, is one that enhances an ability to act in a certain context, or to meet some declared purpose. I suggest that an enabling metaphor reveals particularly significant features when the framework is applied to it. However, I use slightly different criteria when I judge *appropriate* metaphors. I define appropriate as an ability to give rise to *different* understandings in a certain context (cf. Gadamer 1975; Snodgrass and Coyne 1991; McClintock and Ison 1994a). Whereas 'enabling' metaphors rely on what aspects are revealed by using a metaphor in a certain context, appropriate metaphors include *both* revealed and concealed aspects. Different understandings can arise just as much from what a metaphor conceals, as much as from what a metaphor enables.

There is a slight operational problem in that, by definition, all metaphors can give rise to different understandings. Further, if understandings are only triggered, and not determined, then can I claim that some metaphors can give rise to 'new' understandings? *In a certain context*, I propose that some metaphors can be considered appropriate, and others not. Some metaphors will also be able highlight limitations of present ways of understanding. I do not claim that a certain metaphor is appropriate in every or any context and some appropriate metaphors can be *disabling* in a different context.

Sontag's (1989) AIDS and its Metaphors draws attention to disabling metaphors: "*of course, one cannot think without metaphors. But that does not mean that there aren't some metaphors we might well abstain from...*" (*ibid.*, p5).

Sontag (1989) refers to certain metaphors of illness: "*the metaphors and myths, I was convinced, kill... for instance, they make people irrationally fearful of effective measures...*" (*ibid.*, p14). Other metaphors "*contribute to the stigmatising of certain illnesses and, by extension, of those who are ill*" (*ibid.*, p11). The metaphor that she considers most disabling when talking of illnesses such as AIDS is a military metaphor: "*the body is not a battlefield. The ill are neither unavoidable casualties nor the enemy... (so) give [the military metaphor] back to the war-makers*" (*ibid.*, p95).

A disabling metaphor, then, reveals and conceals understandings and actions that are destructive or harmful in a particular context. One advantage of applying the framework that I have proposed is that these aspects become explicit and the metaphor can then be discarded: "*...the metaphors cannot be distanced just by abstaining from them. They have to be exposed, criticised, belaboured, used up*" (*ibid.*, p94).

Sontag (1989) makes a further point that certain metaphors are persistent even when they can be considered disabling. She does not address an important issue of 'disabling for whom?', although this can explain why some metaphors are perpetuated. For example, she dislikes the war metaphors for AIDS, especially as it stigmatises those with the illness. Now personally, I agree with her. However, some doctors might disagree, and instead call the metaphor *enabling* with regard to treatments. In addition, perhaps funding for treatment is more available under a war metaphor (as it concerns a nation's safety, and so on) and otherwise AIDS might not be considered 'serious' enough. Therefore I suggest that 'disabling' is best applied sparingly, and only *after* revealed and concealed aspects have been considered as well as the question 'disabling for who?'. The same comments that I made with regard to who takes responsibility for exploring metaphors applies to who judges metaphors as appropriate, disabling and alternative.

Discarding metaphors judged to be disabling leads to trying to find alternative metaphors that are not disabling in a certain context. 'Alternative' metaphors are the third type of judgement that I propose can follow an exploration of revealed and concealed aspects. Alternative metaphors imply that they are *not* being used in a certain context at a particular time, but may trigger different understandings if they are used or explored. Two of the main sources for alternative metaphors are 'theory', and the judgements about appropriate and

disabling metaphors. In some cases, a simple 'reversal' or 'opposite' of a disabling metaphor might be enough to suggest an alternative metaphor.

I claim that alternative metaphors arise from exploration and judgements but then act as *proposals*. That is, they invite a further use, or iteration, of the framework to ascribe and confirm revealed and concealed aspects. I describe in later chapters how I proposed certain metaphors in workshops, in order to explore them and see if they could indeed trigger different ways of understanding. Judgements are thus intended to feed into a process rather than be definitive. I certainly acknowledge that my judgements are not the only possibilities, nor are they in any sense 'objective'.

In the following chapters I explore metaphors of future countrysides, and then judge these metaphors according to whether they are appropriate, disabling and alternative. Before I do so, I illustrate the judgements with a theoretical example.

Many writers talk about a metaphor as a *partial* understanding (e.g. Morgan 1986). Sternberg (1990: 16) claims that to understand intelligence "...*all of the metaphors [considered] need to be complemented by others in order to achieve a more nearly complete grasp of what intelligence is about*". Metaphors-as-*partial* understandings reveals that metaphors can not be applied to all contexts or all situations. It conceals, however, an assumption that understandings *can* be complete. If there are complete understandings, then the holder can stop considering metaphors and hence stop considering different understandings. On this basis, I judge this metaphor to be disabling. Instead, I consider these authors might be trying to acknowledge *many* metaphors when they invoke the 'partial' metaphor, and I suggest an alternative of 'metaphors-as-one of many ways of understanding'. This metaphor reveals multiple understandings without implying that there is a whole understanding. 'Partial' is best left as a description of restructuring domains, as implied by Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 13), that restructuring is *partial* otherwise one concept would *be* the other.

4.5 Reflections on Chapter 4

The task at hand is to outline my narrative and my understanding of the research context. This chapter has been necessary to describe some theoretical and methodological aspects that determine *how* I can understand the research context by using metaphors. I have described how metaphors can be brought forth, the methods I chose for doing so, a framework for exploring metaphors, and finally, what judgements might contribute to an understanding of the research context.

One important conclusion is that methodologically a range of metaphors is needed to gain an understanding of a research context: not so that a 'more complete' understanding can be reached, but rather so that the framework and judgements can be effective.

I claimed in an earlier chapter that metaphors can be used to explain, appreciate and create a diversity of understandings. On the basis of this present chapter, I can add a fourth use of metaphors: to make explicit understandings, which can then be judged to be appropriate (that is, trigger further understandings) or disabling. This is where Sontag's (1989) analysis becomes important, as bringing forth metaphors allows different understandings and their assumptions to become explicit. Although, if I am totally consistent, I have to admit that imposing an 'X-as-Y' formulation on understandings also *conceals* other ways of understanding our understandings. Further, unless relationships between metaphors, and nests of metaphors, are worked with, an X-as-Y formulation can also conceal how metaphors can co-exist or contradict one another. At this stage, I will duck these issues and make a counter-suggestion that researchers use metaphors to understand a research context *anyway*, and all I am doing is being explicit about it. This is an issue worthy of further attention, but one outside the scope of the research.

Another issue worthy of further research is how an awareness of metaphors can enhance the methods that I have discussed. Actively bringing forth different metaphors might provide a way to approach research methods in diverse stakeholder contexts. I suggest that bringing forth metaphors can stop a passive view of research as 'observing' others, a disabling view of researcher-neutrality, and can instead lead to ways of working *with* people and their understandings.

One interesting diversion would be to return to some of the metaphors expressed earlier, and re-work them in terms of what aspects are revealed and concealed. For example, I could consider what 'research-as-action' reveals and conceals. One reason for not doing so is structural: I wanted to reflect on research and the positions and roles of research *before* I talked about methods. Another reason is that it is a distraction from understanding how future countrysides can emerge. To re-consider research metaphors means occupying a certain space which, although it could result in a 'tighter' and more consistent argument, is not actually central to my core thesis of *using* metaphors in research. And where do I stop anyway? If I re-work the metaphors of research, then logically I should rework the whole of Chapter 2 as well, and consider what metaphors such as language-as-metaphorical reveal and conceal. Instead, I offer the following three chapters as an indication of what an exploration of research metaphors might look like, and flag it as an issue worthy of further attention. The next three chapters discuss the actual metaphors brought forth during this research.

Chapter 5 Images of countrysides: understanding the research context I

This chapter is the first of three chapters that outline how metaphors gave an understanding of the research context. *Images of countrysides* is my narrative of the metaphors that were brought forth in the research, my analysis of these metaphors by using the framework, and my judgements as to appropriate, disabling and alternative metaphors.

The title of this chapter acknowledges the influence of Gareth Morgan's Images of Organization on this research, as well as the idea that metaphors can be used to structure research reports. I start this chapter by discussing two preliminary metaphors implicit in previous chapters: countrysides-as-metaphorical and countrysides-as-human activity systems. These two metaphors provide a basis to explore a diversity of metaphors.

In order to discuss the large number of metaphors brought forth in this research, I have used diagramming to explore clusters and relationships and constructed an 'overview' table. The seven clusters that come from this process enable countrysides to be discussed in both breadth and depth. By breadth, I mean exploring a number of different metaphors, and by depth I mean considering a diversity of aspects revealed and concealed by a certain metaphor.

5.1 Preliminary metaphors

Countrysides-as-metaphorical reveals an acceptance of 'multiple countrysides', each corresponding to different social constructions of reality (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1971). The image also reveals an acceptance of viewing language-as-metaphorical. Metaphorical countrysides 'exist' in the domain of language, and as such, can be debated *ad infinitum* as to what they really 'are'. Exploring a range of metaphors can enhance this discussion, as implied by Evernden (1992: 22) when he says: "...we also speak of nature through images". The metaphor conceals a possibility that people are unwilling, or unable, to look at different metaphors of countrysides; an issue I address in a later chapter. The metaphor can conceal actions, and be dismissed as being abstract rather than grounded.

The metaphor countrysides-as-human activity systems reveals the human activity that constructs 'multiple countrysides', and that countrysides are not totally abstract. Language is, of course, a human activity, so the two metaphors are very similar. By concentrating on human activity, the metaphor questions a pervasive tendency to separate humans (or culture) from nature. The metaphor also reveals a commitment to using systems concepts (see section 2.3.1).

Checkland (1981) coins the acronym HAS to describe how *systems* are manifest as the perceptions of human actors, who attribute meaning according to their *Weltanschauungen* (world view). HASs are not used as 'descriptions of reality' (*ibid.*, p19; p249), they do not exist! To clarify this concept, HASs have also been described as 'purposeful holons' (Checkland and Scholes, 1990: 23; see also McClintock and Ison, 1994a). Introducing 'purpose' has also been deftly treated to tie with 'emergence' (Checkland and Scholes, 1990: 24), where an emergent property of a HAS is to pursue the purpose of the whole.

The relevance of seeing countrysides *as* human activity systems confirms:

- countrysides include humans, in both an epistemological and practical sense; and
- countrysides do not 'exist', and that the concept of countrysides reflects 'purpose'.

The rest of this section reflects mainly the first part: countrysides include humans. Kersten (1995: 12) recognises that grazing systems, for example, include farmers. Hence listening to and interacting with graziers becomes important, which is something forgotten in a lot of current agricultural research. As human activities, both agriculture and countrysides only derive meaning from interactions with people involved in those activities (cf. McClintock and Ison 1994a).

Williams (1980: 77) argues that the abstraction of humans from nature led to a popular view of nature: "*...all that was not man: all that was not touched by man, spoilt by man: nature as the lonely places, the wilderness...*". Further:

"... (For example) hedges were seen as natural, as part of nature, though I should imagine everyone knows that they were planted and tended, and indeed would not be hedges if man had not made them so".

Williams continues his point:

"A considerable part of what we call natural landscape has the same kind of history. It is the product of human design and human labour, and in admiring it as natural it matters very much whether we suppress that fact of labour or acknowledge it..." (ibid., p78).

A concept of 'countrysides' can be easily substituted for 'nature'. The implication of this abstraction for Williams is that a nature 'out there' can be reshaped to a dominant need, without having to consider what this impact has on humans (*ibid.*, p79). Fisher (1993) describes this as Cartesian dualism, the capacity to see ourselves as actors *in* and *on* the environment. Williams (1980: 77) claims that this abstraction has also led *"to major developments in the human capacity to sustain and care for life in quite new ways"* (*ibid.*, p77). This is akin to saying that 'abstraction' has revealed and concealed certain aspects.

Williams, coming from a Marxist perspective, chooses to focus on a suppression of human labour by the separation of humans from nature (and consequent differentiation between culture and nature). Human activity also includes observation, description and participation rather than just labour. Countrysides-as-HASs do not allow for a separation between humans and nature. The metaphor also avoids concepts of nature as an object or commodity to be produced and consumed.

Rackham (1987: xiii) in the preface to The History of the Countryside describes how: *"the ordinary landscape of Britain has been made both by the natural world and by human activities, interacting with each other over many centuries"*. Blunden and Curry (1985: 15) describe this as a 'centuries-long conversation between man and nature'. The metaphor of countrysides-as-a conversation resonates with both of the preliminary images. Rackham claims it is a gross exaggeration, however, to say that the ordinary landscape is *"merely the result of human design and ambition"*, because this does not acknowledge the other player (Nature) in the game. For example, *"... trees are not just things that people plant, like gateposts..."* (*ibid.*, pxiii). He invokes distinctions such as 'semi-natural', 'almost wholly artificial', and 'almost wholly natural' to avoid the difficulty of saying *"where Nature stops and human activity begins"* (*ibid.*, pxiii). This difficulty is only an issue when people suppress human activity in countrysides, as I discussed earlier. Human activity can also include

unintended consequences and changes in perception, not just design and ambition as mentioned by Rackham.

Mabey (1993) in The Common Ground recognises that 'Nature' is not separate from value judgements and choices of humans. *"It is impossible to put any evaluation on the natural world divorced of any human context"* (*ibid.*, p34). That is, *"our relationship with the natural world is essentially a creative one-whether we just stop to glance at a flower or devise a World Conservation Strategy"* (*ibid.*, p33, emphasis original). Mabey's position also reflects how we are immersed in a situation of acting that we can not step outside of. Mabey's position is also quite important because it shows that ontological claims can be avoided. That is, one does not have to insist on, or deny the existence of 'Nature'.

The metaphor 'countrysides-as-human activity systems' does not coincide with an 'anthropocentric view', that sees humans as the centre of nature (see Greidner and Garkovich 1994). Neither does it coincide with an 'ecocentric view' that sees humans as part of nature, as promoted by, for example, Evernden (1992). As human activities all perceptions are human centred, and these terms become meaningless. Rather distinctions need to refer to the 'purpose' as indicated previously.

The preliminary metaphors enable an exploration of other metaphors brought forth in this research. In the next section I present an overview of what these metaphors are.

5.2 An overview of metaphors brought forth in this research

Over 50 metaphors of countrysides were brought forth in this research. All of these cannot be explored and presented, unless I devote the whole of this thesis to this activity. Either some illustrative examples, or 'case studies' need to be chosen, or metaphors need to be clustered and discussed together. I have chosen clustering to give both a reasonable breadth and depth to my exploration of images of countrysides.

I use two techniques to aid this clustering: diagramming because it creates clusters by showing relationships between metaphors visually (see Figure 5.1), and tables because they can condense a large number of words and different forms of analysis (see Table 5.1).

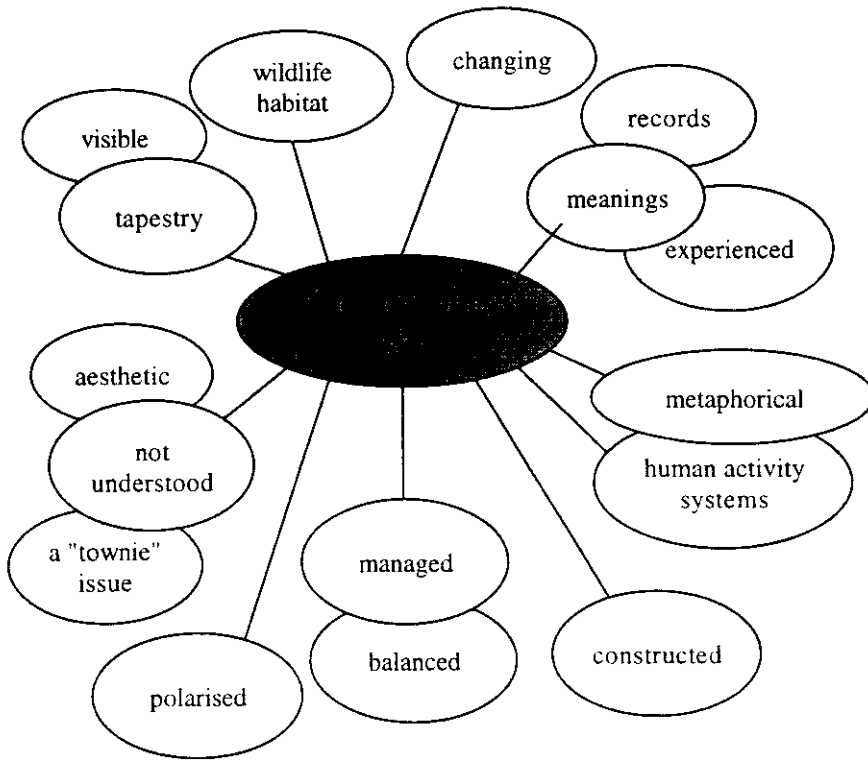


Figure 5.1 Relationships between metaphors of countryside brought forth in the research

Table 5.1 An overview of metaphors of countryside brought forth in the research

Metaphor (cluster) Countrysides-as-...	Main source(s)	Reveals	Conceals	Related metaphors Countrysides-as-...
Tapestry	literature, fieldwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * diversity * wholeness * interconnections * local character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * human activity * changes * non-visual aspects * an outside observer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * a patchwork quilt * a jigsaw * a lattice * a fabric
Aesthetic/ superficial/ picture	theory, literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * visual beauty * enjoyment * idealised (rural idyll) * sanitised aspects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * workings and function * how we understand * non-visual aspects * an outside observer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * a picture * a fashion * a chocolate box * visible
Meanings	literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * human involvement * story telling * inspiration * spirituality * romantic aspects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * workings and function * 'constructs' * wildlife habitats * meaning is ascribed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * emotional * a dialogue
Records	literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * history * desire to 'preserve' * quaint and old-fashioned aspects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * dynamic and alive aspects * interpretations * 'who' records? * can be described * future records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * a museum
Experienced	theory, literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * enjoyed * aesthetic * 'meaning' * visitors and dwellers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * class issues * non-visitors (who don't have contact) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 'tranquil' * enjoyed * close to hand
Polarised	literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * specialisation and separation of activities * conflict and entrenched views * a large number of organisations * different discourses and communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 'integration' * multi-purpose * site-based approaches to conservation * wildlife corridors * conflict resolution * dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * a ghetto * manipulated * jobs for the boys * Tory grandees * political
Changing	literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * dynamic aspects * processes of change * an increasing capacity to effect change * negative connotations to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * long term or not-visible change * 'kaleidoscope' * past mistakes * momentum and difficulty of change * <i>change of perceptions rather than change per se</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 'alive' * organic * dynamic

**Table 5.1 An overview of metaphors of countrysides brought forth in the research
(Continued)**

Metaphor (cluster) Countrysides-as-...	Main source(s)	Reveals	Conceals	Related metaphors Countrysides-as-...
Managed	literature, fieldwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * workings and functions * farming and activities * intervention * stewardship * designations * regulations * grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * unintended effects * emergence * countrysides seen as 'out there' and can be manipulated * neglect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * shaped and constructed * farmed * a garden * harvested * multi-purpose * balanced
Balanced	fieldwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 'multi-purpose' * many uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * integration or balance * instability * not achievable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * harmony * equilibrium
Not understood	fieldwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * fear * superficial views * poor communication * educational issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * claims made by who? * someone does understand * purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * fear * an alien place * under the microscope
A townie issue	fieldwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * playground * recreation * farmers attacked * incomers/commuters * countrysides are not a top priority issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * country sports * 'ownership' * town issues (e.g. 'dormitories for commuters', etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * selective * a vociferous group of people
Wildlife habitat	fieldwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * other species than humans * eco-systems * habitat creation and maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * management * intervention * (what is wild?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * (as with metaphors of experienced and meanings)
Human Activity System	theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * role of humans * actions * purpose * systems ideas 	??	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * as (mental) constructs
Metaphorical	theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * multiple-countrysides * language * many metaphors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * people can't or don't want to consider metaphors * abstract 	

Table 5.1 condenses the various metaphors brought forth into 14 clusters, including the two preliminary images. There is no significance to the order. In the second column of this table, I note the sources of these metaphors: either literature, theoretical commitments or fieldwork. Conversations and *participating in everyday activities* are included under the one banner of 'fieldwork'. In the next column, I indicate some of the aspects that I ascribe as being revealed and concealed when each metaphor is invoked. I also indicate some related metaphors to each of the clusters.

The seven clusters that I arrived at *do not* represent all metaphors possible nor is it a fixed typology. Rather, I use these clusters as *one way, amongst many ways, of presenting a large number of metaphors*.

5.3 Exploring images of countrysides

The table and figure present an overview, but conceal the diversity of insights within any particular metaphor cluster. I now turn to this diversity and ascribe revealed and concealed aspects of each metaphor cluster. These are my interpretations and co-researchers may not have attributed their actual comments to the *particular metaphors that I discuss*. Co-researchers probably would not have clustered the metaphors as I did, either.

To add sincerity, I quote from conversations and the literature as much as possible: for the first I use a different font and a square bracket with a code such as [c1]¹ which indicates who said it, and I indicate a citation from the literature with italics and rounded brackets as I have in previous chapters.

The following explorations are quite detailed. For an indication of how the framework is applied, then it may be sufficient to just look at the explorations of countrysides-as-a-tapestry and countrysides-as-polarised. For an indication of *how metaphors contribute to an understanding of the research context*, then all of the following discussion is relevant. The overview may also be used to select which metaphors and their explorations are of interest.

¹ The letter stands for a county, and the number for a person within that county. Conversations and contacts were numbered chronologically. I have used the codes to maintain confidentiality whilst indicating which statements were made by the same person (see also section 4.2.2). A code of [h*] refers to either written or verbal statements within a particular workshop setting (Workshop 6), where it was not possible to say who actually made those statements.

5.3.1 COUNTRYSIDES-AS-A TAPESTRY

A *tapestry* was one powerful image emphasised at a Countryside Commission (CoCo) conference in 1995, and special reference was made to the *rich tapestry of England*². Action was called for because the tapestry has "... (become) faded... less distinct... (and) some parts threadbare" (*op.cit.*).

A tapestry metaphor reveals certain attributes of countrysides, particularly those around wholeness, diversity, and interconnections. The metaphor conceals aspects such as non-visual perceptions and experiences, and also that observers are outside the tapestry [i13]. A tapestry is also a very static image, and conceals changes in countrysides.

Tapestry metaphors were initially brought forth from the literature on countrysides. Lowe *et al.* (1986: 26), for example, draws from writing in the 1950's describing how the countryside is a *patchwork quilt*. The quilt can be made up of different colours from the fields and different types of livestock. Other metaphors closely related to countrysides-as-tapestries are *fabric* (Mabey 1993: 195), and *jigsaw* (Gilder 1994). The image of a jigsaw is closely associated with an initiative to map different regions in England, which I discuss later.

A farmer saw a tapestry arising from an aerial view of the countryside, in which case hedges and roads make up the outlines [i7]. FWAG advisers also expressed ideas of a "network of hedges", and also "the framework of isolated farms, small villages and hamlets..." [h*]. Network and framework images relate to 'interconnections', an aspect revealed by tapestry metaphors. Interconnections between habitats have led to ecological theories such as 'wildlife corridors' (see Rich 1994), and a need to avoid an 'oasis' effect (Mabey 1993; Morris and Cobb 1993). An oasis effect arises when habitats are focused on to the exclusion of what is between these habitats: a site-based approach to conservation. Adams *et al.* (1994) recognise that conservation can be wider than just 'designated' sites and can consider 'the wider countryside'. Countrysides-as-a lattice is an interesting derivative of their image of a lattice of micro-habitats (*ibid.*, p147).

² "Conserving the Landscape of the Eastern Region", Countryside Commission conference at Ely, 11/4/95. Most comments relate to Tim de Keyzer's address "Developing a vision for the landscape: a proposal" (Senior Countryside Officer, CoCo).

Diversity is one of the revealed aspects that has been carefully expounded in the literature. One farmer related diversity to "... part of the charm, the way we've got this criss-cross pattern of different shapes" [19]. Diversity and variety have *"been the saving grace of life since its beginning"* (Mabey 1993: 27). Diversity is rarely questioned; rather it is something 'good' and should be pursued as a goal (or purpose of a HAS). Uniformity and standardisation, on the other hand, are seen as negative [d2]. Diversity can be seen in three spheres:

- as a multiplicity of interests and uses, all of which have an impact on the landscape (cf. Blunden and Curry 1985: 18);
- as a diversity of agricultural activities, which is contrasted by a trend towards increased specialisation (Mabey 1993; Body 1984)
- as a diversity of species or communities, that is 'biodiversity' (cf. IUCN quoted above).

Considering 'biodiversity' in any detail is outside the scope of this thesis, except that by definition, human and social diversity is as much a part of biodiversity as plant and animal species. Mabey (1993: xiii) makes one intriguing reference to human diversity and nature conservation, although he does not elaborate on it:

"at its roots, nature conservation seems to me to be a human celebration of the diversity of life, and perhaps a recognition of our own diversity is the first step we have to take toward this".

My thesis is that metaphors may be a way to appreciate diversity.

Diversity also leads to a consideration of local distinctiveness. The Countryside Commission (CoCo) see its challenge as to retain and enhance the local distinctiveness throughout the countryside (CoCo 1995: 9). CoCo includes social and historical features as well as biodiversity in local distinctiveness, and proposes to map this in a "New Map of England". Gilder (1994: 4) outlines this project, which *"aims to identify all of the pieces that make up this landscape jigsaw puzzle, describe the character of each of the pieces and link them together to paint a portrait of the English countryside in the 1990's..."* (emphasis added). This 'map' has been transformed into the "Countryside Character Programme", which is designed to provide a context for policies and programmes though not to lead to any formal designations (CoCo 1995). This is an example of how a metaphor can be embodied in policies.

FWAG advisers highlighted *local character* in Workshop 6. Local character related to distinctiveness [h4], and to identity and sense of place [h5]. CoCo maps were associated with the 'lovely' side of local character, whereas negative aspects were also apparent: "... local character can be a very negative thing. People can be depressed, because (of) the character of their local countryside..." [h5].

A lot of the comments surrounding diversity and local identity were associated with loss:

"... the landscapes are becoming less diverse, and... Suffolk looks like Bedfordshire which looks like parts of Bucks. You could be anywhere, you have lost your local identity... I mean it is all part of the rich tapestry of England, isn't it? Where you go, you ought to know that you have gone to Shropshire, or you have gone to Suffolk, or you've gone to Bedfordshire, it shouldn't just be another bit of lowland England" [c1].

Two other projects implicitly use tapestry metaphors: 'Parish Maps' developed by an organisation called Common Ground (Clifford 1989) and the 'Jigsaw' project (BDOR 1991). 'Jigsaw' refers to the production of locally developed packs and videos, which also included parish maps. Both projects were mainly funded by CoCo as *pilot* studies to explore the potential for community action. One of the participants in Workshop 2 was involved in making a parish map, made of local people's individual tapestries of the houses in her village [e10].

One FWAG adviser in Workshop 6 was very enthusiastic about 'tapestry' metaphors, because it explained what had been lost in his county: "we have a mono-culture" now, whereas a tapestry is preferred [h5]. Other FWAG advisers thought that a tapestry relates more to a certain type of landscape that features small fields, and that trying to create a tapestry might not always be appropriate [h*]. By implication, a tapestry conceals different farming types, as not all farms have small fields. Where there was a tapestry, farmers were seen as the best way of maintaining it: "If we want to maintain the diversity of the countryside we have at the moment, the tapestry, the cheapest way, and probably the most efficient way we can achieve that is to continue keeping farmers on the land. If you lost the farmers who on earth is going to maintain that tapestry of habitat" [h5]. This has links to farming-as-business metaphors and the idea that farmers have to be kept in business to maintain the countryside.

A "tapestry of individual farmers" implied that one farmer "could not influence the countryside" [i1]. An extension of this argument suggests that farmers are

concerned for their individual farms rather than act in the interest of a 'tapestry' [i7]. I discuss this point further in two later discussions: countrysides-as-managed and countrysides-as-polarised. However, tapestries were seen to be not just farms but also to include motorways, villages and towns (and so on) [i7].

Farmers in Workshop 5 discussed the concealed aspects of tapestry metaphors, such as: "it's got no smells" [i7]; "...you look at a tapestry, it doesn't really serve any purpose" [i7]; " ... (you view it) from a distance" [i9]; and "you're not actually in it yourself, are you... you're isolated" [i13]. The first two refer to a tendency for countrysides to be associated with just visual aspects, which excluded non-visual perceptions and experiences. "Smells" from agricultural practices was one source of conflict [d1]. The second two concealed aspects refer to a tendency to not include humans and also to the 'position of the observer'. Tapestry metaphors can conceal an awareness of 'the observer'.

Further concealed aspects related to 'who is making a tapestry?', and a claim was made that some people who wanted a certain view "were not doing anything about making them" [i13]. FWAG advisers concluded in their discussion that many people, rather than just one person, made a tapestry and that it had evolved rather than be planned.

The discussion above highlights the richness of a metaphor such as countrysides-as-a tapestry. I used this metaphor as a 'proposal' for participants to consider in the metaphor workshops, and I discuss its ability to trigger dialogue in Chapter 9 (see also Figure A4.3). The next metaphor cluster discussed is countrysides-as-meanings. A farmer linked the two clusters when she said that a "tapestry could tell a story" [i14].

5.3.2 COUNTRYSIDES-AS-MEANINGS

I discuss three metaphors of countrysides under this cluster: *meanings*, *records* and *experiences*. Whereas the tapestry metaphors concealed non-visual perceptions and experiences, this cluster reveals how countrysides may be experienced and that it is humans that ascribe meanings to countrysides. The cluster largely conceals working within countrysides. The cluster was initially brought forth from the literature on countrysides.

Rackham (1987: 26) links metaphors of records and meanings when he states that: "*{t}he landscape is a record of our roots and the growth of civilisation. Each individual historic wood, heath, etc., is uniquely different from every other, and each has something to tell us*". Countrysides-as-meanings appears a powerful metaphor. That is not to say that countrysides contain meanings, or have meanings, rather meanings are ascribed. Mabey (1993: 22) states "...*there is no sense in which conservation can deliberately set out to preserve 'meanings'...*".

Leopald's land ethic demonstrates one meaning that has been ascribed to countrysides: "... *that the land is a community is a basic concept of ecology, but that the land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics*" (Mabey 1993: 180). From this, the "... *health of the land is an indicator of the state of man*" (that is, one meaning countrysides can have is as an indicator of how healthy we perceive ourselves to be). Lowe *et al.* (1986: 57) look to countrysides for "*deeper meanings*", our "*sense of identity*", and our "*association with the past*".

Rackham (1987) points to the loss of meaning associated with landscape destruction. Loss of meaning is also associated with a loss of beauty, a loss of freedom, and a loss of historic vegetation and wildlife. I discuss this 'loss' as part of the exploration of countrysides-as-changing.

Countrysides as records revealed historical aspects of countrysides, such as archaeology [h*], and the Enclosure Act [i7] which contributed to the establishment of a wider network of hedges. These historical records were seen as a part of school education, and probably "gives them a perception of how the countryside (should look)..." [i7]. Having records was not seen as a problem, it was the meaning ascribed to those records: "...*(have got) records, if you want records about agriculture right back to the year dot... how things have changed with people working on the land, and that there's less and less people, but production has increased and things like that - but people don't seem to look at that and realised why the changes have been made*" [i7]. Some FWAG advisers also illustrated a point about records using agricultural examples: spray records were not only useful, they were necessary under EU regulations [h1].

A related metaphor to *records* is that of countrysides-as-a museum (Mabey 1993). This was usually mentioned by farmers and advisers in a negative context, such as images around "chocolate box" pictures [e7; i13]. A more positive connotation referred to 'heritage', for example "most people see hedges

as part of their heritage" [i13]. A record is very static though, which conceals action and change. Commentators do not want to see preservation of a (static) museum piece, rather: "*we want the opportunity to experience it (the countryside) face to face*" (Mabey 1993: 22). This is supported by Lowe *et al.* (1986: 57): "*conservation is, and must remain, a part of everyday experience*". Cox (1988: 34) elaborates on everyday experiences:

"...emphasis has been on the 'perception of landscapes rather than experience in landscapes, and on landscape merely as an impersonal assemblage of visible features rather than a realm of interaction' (Denning-Rowse 1986: 114)" (emphasis original).

Exploring the metaphor countryside-as-experiences reveals both *what* those experiences are (can be), and how those experiences take place. Cusick (1995), for example, draws attention to an association of countryside with tranquillity. Tranquillity is contrasted with the "urban blight", of noise, pollution and overcrowding. Cusick also notes that the areas defined as tranquil (beyond a certain distance from towns, roads, airports, and such) have decreased dramatically in the last 30 years. FWAG advisers looked at experiences of emotion [h3], and inspiration displayed particularly by poets and artists for centuries [h1]. Freedom and clean, fresh air [h2] were other aspects revealed. More negative aspects included experiencing the countryside-as-traffic jams [h1], and a perception that many people did not experience the countryside, rather they just passed through it on their way from one city to another [h2]. Countrysides may be thought by some to be a "boring place to be", and quaint and old-fashioned [h4].

'Visitors' and 'dwellers' were people who were seen to have these sorts of experiences. Countrysides were a "place to go to" [h1], or a "place to live and work" [i7, h3]. Experiences of living in countryside could dispel images of a "rural idyll", that countryside were an ideal place to be (Hill 1995). Hill cites alienation, poverty, and lack of transport as experiences for many living in rural villages, which contrasts strongly to visitors' perceptions of recreation and "playground" [h2]. One aspect concealed by experience-based metaphors is a popular view that it is only a small percentage of the population which can experience countryside. O'Riordan *et al.* (1993: 138) cite CoCo estimates that only 17% of those employed in manual occupations visit the countryside; rather visitors are seen to be mainly white middle-class professionals [e.g., h3].

One very prominent issue of concern that related to experience and visitors was the provision of footpaths and 'access'. I discuss this issue along with other conflicts in the metaphor of countrysides-as-polarised.

Both *meanings* and *tapestries*, are rather static clusters. The next cluster of metaphors can reveal more dynamic aspects of countrysides.

5.3.3 COUNTRYSIDES-AS-CHANGING

Countrysides-as-changing may seem an obvious metaphor, but it reveals and conceals a rich diversity of insights. Change has generally been linked to destruction, rather than creation, and agricultural change has been considered causal of countrysides change. The metaphor conceals, that under the outlined position, it is changes in HAS and understandings rather than changes in a physical sense. The metaphor also conceals that changes are long term and not visible, and that perhaps countrysides have not changed as much as they could have.

Almost all commentators on countrysides change point to a loss of species and habitats, which reveals change as being destructive. Lowe *et al.* (1986: 55) paint a common story: "*Over the past 35 years, the nation has lost 95% of lowland rich-herb grasslands, 80% of chalk and limestone grasslands, 60% of lowland heaths, 45% of limestone pavements, 50% of ancient woodlands, 50% of lowland fens and marshes (etc.)...*". One farmer remembered: "... this area being virtually grass, there wasn't much arable on it at all. And the hedgerows, you'd go down the road and you wouldn't see out of the road. You know this wasn't really reclaimed until the last war" [i6].

Countrysides are seen to be changing in many ways, not just in terms of species and habitats. Blunden and Curry (1988: 3) outline some demographic trends that highlight a dramatic increase in the number of people who live in rural areas, but work in cities (commonly called 'commuters'). There also has been suggestions of an ageing of rural populations, with an increase in retired people moving to rural areas. BDOR (1991: 25) points to these newcomers as having a large influence and a role in getting things started, as well as bringing in fresh perspectives. They are also, however, a source of conflict, as I discuss later.

Change can be contrasted with stability, where it is sudden changes that are seen as destructive, not change itself. Mabey (1993: 27) comments that change can enhance intricacy or diversity: "*but only if its pace and scale do not exceed*

those at which nature can adjust". Hence change does not have to be associated with destruction, and the type of change can also vary (e.g. gradual, radical or chaotic change).

Farmers in the workshops pointed to changes being long term and gradual: "... [change is] always subtle. There's something happening everyday, which contributes to the whole" [i4]. "Yes, it's the minute changes that... make a major change" [i14]. A consequence of the long term nature was that changes might not be visible, or perceptible, and easily forgotten [h*]. In Australia, certain technologies have been used to 'make visible' and speed up long term processes such as soil erosion (cf. Hamilton 1995, with a 'rainfall simulator'). However, none of these sorts of technologies seemed to be in use amongst the farming and FWAG communities.

Change was not only seen as gradual, but as having a momentum: "Once something is rolling, it's a hell of a job to turn it round- it's a bit like an oil tanker" [h1]. Potter (1986: 194) in his article on countryside change confirms this: "... *the process of countryside change has an inbuilt momentum and will continue to be driven forward by factors which are embedded within the present structure of the industry and the value systems of individual farmers...*". Further, Potter claims that "... *countryside change may be less manageable than many expect*" (*ibid.*, p194).

The metaphor change-as-destructive leads Lowe *et al.* (1986: 63) to lay the blame on agriculture (and forestry): although urban sprawl is often blamed, "*undoubtedly, the main pressures arise from agricultural intensification and afforestation*". Mabey (1993: 83) states that the requirements of modern farming have transformed the intimate details of the landscape. However, some farmers thought that "... things are a lot better now than they were ten years ago, because I think farmers have moved" [i9]. In addition, agriculture itself was seen to be suffering from the impact of roads and development: "... we're still losing 25000 acres a year out of production in this country alone..." [i6], what Cusick (1995) describes as the urban blight. This sort of 'debate' about whether countrysides have improved or declined mirrors the findings of Kersten (1995), who found a 'degradation debate' in her research in Australia.

Rackham (1987) invokes a powerful metaphor, the *myth of the kaleidoscope*, to discount arguments that change is not destructive, and that change can be related to stability.

A kaleidoscope is a tube with mirrors and coloured fragments to produce colourful patterns. This kaleidoscope is:

"...the belief that the countryside has always been changing; that its features were made by farmers and are no more than the passing of agricultural fashions; that new habitats are created as well as old ones destroyed; and that a bit of (unspecified) change matters little... in reality, changes have happened at some times and in some places but not in others" (Rackham 1987: 26).

Mabey (1993: 85) highlights *creative* aspects to change when he quotes from the Countryside Commission's discussion of 'New Agricultural Landscapes':

"the Commission accept the inevitability of further large-scale changes in the appearance of farmed lowlands but also seek to encourage the creation of new agricultural landscapes, different from, but not necessarily less interesting than, the old. These new landscapes would differ critically from those which are already evolving because there would be a conscious input of new features; they would not, in other words, be the accidental product of modern farming".

An illustration of creative change given in fieldwork referred to Dutch Elm disease: "we have seen the landscape around here absolutely change catastrophically with Dutch Elm disease..." [d2]. This was seen as creative, as it allowed planting of a variety of trees instead: "actually the vale will be much richer for the fact that the elms have gone, because people have planted lots of different types of trees...{pointing some out}" [e4]. This illustration of creative change also illustrates a recognition of the desire to see trees in the landscape, and management activities needed for this presence.

The discussion of change and destruction needs to be put in a context of what sort of changes have occurred in agriculture. I discuss policy changes, especially the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), in the next chapter although it is worth noting that Rackham (1987) sees the changes as being in place before CAP's destructive influence. Lowe *et al.* (1986) point to the increased mechanisation of agriculture. Fixed capital has tended to replace labour, which is also shown by the decrease in agricultural workers (Blunden and Curry 1988). Farms have changed in structure, leaving: bigger, more specialised farms; an increase in owner occupied farms (as estates are sold off); and also an increase in the number of institutional landowners. Potter (1990) and Potter

and Lobley (1993) explain environmental loss in terms of this rapid change in structure. Structural change is of concern, if it is assumed that small farms are more sensitive to environmental needs, and that amalgamating small farms leads to a corresponding destruction (*op.cit.*). McEachern (1992: 160) instead looks to increased technology as a central factor in the intensification of agriculture, and that this has had a profound effect on transforming the environment to the detriment of wildlife habitats.

Another aspect concealed by this cluster of metaphors, is that there had not been as much change as is possible. Given the pressures to change, one farmer commented that "I think you can make a case for saying actually that there's not been as much change as you might have expected, when you look at the pressures on the industry to produce, there's still a hell of a lot of hedges and ditches around.... we could have made a case for pushing them all out..." [i13]. This could be because "...it's only because farmers actually like to see some..." [i13], or partly that "... we're in a rural environment, and we're all a bit conservative, and we all do things slowly (and) we don't wake up in the morning and say right, everything's going..." [i9]. Costs of removing hedges do not seem to have been taken into account in these farmers' analyses, but another explanation is that change is not particularly desirable either because it is "painful" [h1], or because we "like the picture the way that it is" [i4].

Countrysides-as-changing has revealed and concealed a variety of aspects such as perceptions of change as destructive and agricultural change as causal of countrysides change. These link in with the next two clusters to be discussed: countrysides-as-managed and countrysides-as-polarised.

5.3.4 COUNTRYSIDES-AS-MANAGED

"... as soon as the first plough (went) in the ground, (we had) to start managing it!" [g3].

The cluster of metaphors countrysides-as-managed, was brought forth mainly during fieldwork. The above quote illustrates some of the perceptions held by farmers, that countrysides could not be separated from management and that humans are always intervening in countrysides. Countrysides-as-managed reveals aspects such as: different types of management and activities, who the managers are, a tension between control and 'activities', and some of the pressures on management. The metaphor conceals aspects such as: an assumption that countrysides are 'out there' to be managed, management is

possible and all relations are understood, and the individual interests and aspirations of those concerned. It also conceals diverse stakeholders as potential managers, and 'emergence' and unintended consequences of human activity systems. Some related metaphors to this cluster are *countrysides-as-farmed, tidy, a landscaped garden, and balanced*.

One aspect revealed during fieldwork was the need for management. Woods, grassland, and other areas³ needed someone to "... work at it to get it to stay like this, somebody's got to put in time, effort and money..." [i9]. In this case, farmers were the ones seen to be managing these areas. The phrase "work at it" indicates that these areas do not occur without intervention, and that if these areas are not managed they would not exist. The same was said of countrysides: "(the) countryside, in this area, just doesn't happen... it needs to be managed" [h5]; and further, "...in order to keep the countryside it costs money..." [h4, emphasis added].

Management was thus closely linked to intervention: "...nature (is) now at such an imbalance... we started intervening and now have to keep intervening..." [g3]. However, countrysides would not happen, because: "... people forget we're fighting nature all the time, and nature will always keep coming back... (and that you) can have it as an 'untouched' area as long as you took the brambles out..." [i9]. The areas would either "revert back over a long time (going) through the stages of being bracken, birch, (oaks)..." [i9], consistent with a "succession model for vegetation", or "I think you've got to look after nature, if you leave it on it's own, it will die" [i5].

People were seen to have been countryside managers for a long time, they: "just haven't called it conservation, or environmental this and that and the other" [i5]. Woods were mentioned as being managed for firewood (until coal became readily available) [i1], and also "... not to make the landscape beautiful, but to ensure that the fox had a good habitat..." [i5]. One concealed aspect of woods being managed for firewood, was that "...they are in fact falling into disrepair" [i1]. Repair was one type of management deemed necessary [i9], which is linked to the use of the words "keep" and "stay like this" quoted above.

³ I use 'area' here instead of 'habitats', in order not to constrain management options. I discuss 'habitats' as part of a later metaphor.

One form of countryside management was seen as agriculture: "The countryside has been entirely made by farmers and landowners... the farmers have made it, and the farmers will determine it" [e5]. Further, agriculture was seen as a correct form of management: "I can see for myself, that the farmers in this area, these small pockets, are doing the right thing..." [d2]. Any intervention was seen to need to involve farmers: "...if [you are] going to deal with the farmland, by definition you have to deal with the farming that is actually managing that farmland" [a1].

A perception that conservation organisations accepted farming as a desirable form of management, reinforced this: "...only recently that English Nature and {a county wildlife trust} have accepted that in order for a lot of the countryside to be managed, to hold the most wildlife, it has to be grazed, it has to be farmed..." [d2].

Farming as managing countrysides revealed that farmers, as managers, were the ones to make decisions about countrysides:

"...I don't mind taking a hedge out, as long as I've planted one where it is not in the way, like a roadside. And again with trees, in the middle of fields, they're a nuisance... (but) my conscience is clear about taking down that tree, because I've planted more trees over here. And that's the way farming has got to change. You've still got the same number of trees and hedges in the county, but they are where farmers want them" [i9].

Farmers were able to do this, because: "... we farmers know that it's a managed countryside, whereas the public think that it's just a natural countryside, don't they, they think if you leave it alone..." [i9]. This did not stop 'the public' from having their say, because "we are so close to (them)... and because they (have) supported us" [i9]. Ideas of 'who the public are' are pursued in later sections. However it was noticeable that this farmer didn't want the countryside as "just a parkland (rather) we want the carrot to be there to farm it in the best way" [i9]. These comments would provoke a harsh response from Rackham (1987) who states that "*tree planting is not synonymous with conservation; it is an admission that conservation has failed... (it) diverts funds and attention away from real conservation and encourages people to go on destroying wild trees*" (*ibid.*, p29)

A management role changed metaphors of agriculture from production to being a working part of the countryside: "a farm isn't just a farm for producing livestock or producing corn, it's a working part of the countryside, or area. And let farmers do other things {such as providing space for light industrial workshops}" [e5]. This can be

rephrased to say that management metaphors reveal aspects of "a working, active, (and) viable countryside" [h2]. Another farmer, who lived in the green belt of a major city, revealed another aspect to countryside management, that of farming stopping urban development. For example, if he had to apply to build a barn then in the planning submission he would not say it "would increase efficiency, but rather that it would maintain the landscape", and hence stop urban development [e6]. Urban development such as roads and houses, and mineral extraction were seen as other forms of countryside management [e6].

Another aspect metaphors of management reveal is whether it is thought of in terms of control or, as above, as activities. Considering the former suggests links to concepts of "man in charge, and anthropocentric(ism)" [h4], and also to "*the blight of tidiness*" described in Rackham (1987: 28). Control also invoked images of "tame versus wild" [h*]. Related metaphors of management, such as management-as-gardening, also came from considering *control*. Members of the public "expect the countryside to be like their gardens" [i13]. I consider the view of farmers-as-landscape gardeners in the next chapter. Managing activities, however, reveals a diversity of management possibilities. This diversity leads to descriptions of countrysides as "multi-purpose" [h*], and also to metaphors of polarisation.

All of Britain was seen as being managed, "...because it is owned by institutions and individuals who want a return... (and it is) the economic pressure of the day that influences the management" [i6]. This introduces some business components to management. Management costs were also not forgotten, especially "time, cost and effort" cited previously [i9].

A quite different pressure on management was the impact of policy and regulations: "...all these methods of (control), are responses to different requirements of the time, and that's how the countryside has evolved: responses to different requirements⁴!" [e6]. This quote reveals the impact of regulations, and how farmers can be seen as part of a system. It conceals aspects relating to stewardship. 'Responses to regulations' also suggests that as regulations change, countrysides will change. One (semi-retired) farmer reminisced that when he was a boy, he was a farmer whereas now everything is ruled by

⁴ This was one of the operational definitions (metaphors) that was triggered in Workshop 1 when participants talked of farmers wanting to be in control. I include most of the discussion on 'policy' as part of the metaphor 'farmers-as-implementors of policy' in the next chapter.

regulations [e5]. Being 'ruled' did not contradict his view that farmers shaped the countryside: "the countryside has been entirely made by farmers and landowners... the farmers have made it, and the farmers will determine it. The regulations and the laws that are applied will affect the way in which farmers determine it..." [e5].

Some policies that affect countrysides explicitly draw on management metaphors. For example, Countryside Stewardship (CS) relies on "management agreements" with landowners. Morris and Potter (1995: 52) depict how agri-environment policy has changed from "*conservation to countryside management*". I discuss these policies in Appendix 1.

Some of the concealed aspects of management are that it assumes that countrysides are 'out there' and can be manipulated, and that management is actually possible. Management does have connotations of experts pulling strings. However, FWAG advisers saw different sides of management: "things that should have been done" and mistakes that have been made in the past [h5]. Indeed: "many would say that it's evolved by accident rather than design... the countryside as we see it is actually just a whole mis-mash of various people's mistakes... rather than any grand plan" [h*]. Another aspect concealed by management relates to scale, and management on the ground was contrasted with that on a grand scale [h*]. Some things also had a huge effect on the ability to manage, especially machines, 'will' and information [h*].

Management metaphors also conceals the aspirations of (potential) managers, and what assumptions and criteria are used to determine 'management'. An implication of this was that "... most people's criteria for what they want to see in the countryside, has really been surpassed by 30-40 years of change since the second world war..." [i13].

One other metaphor relates to management: countrysides-as-balanced. Balancing reveals that the many uses and activities outlined as management need to be accommodated. A balance implies an equilibrium [i14] but not stability. Indeed "we always go from one extreme to the other" [i9], which was thought of as the "swings of the pendulum" [i14]. Intervention (in this case with respect to songbird numbers) was needed to "get the balance that we think is right" [i9]. Another thought that the balance was "... about right at the moment, between environmental encouragements and farming... I don't think there is a conflict of interest... (a conflict) is when the environmentalists become extreme..." [e4].

Metaphors of balance provide a contrast to metaphors of polarisation and conflict; which I discuss in the next section.

5.3.5 COUNTRYSIDES-AS-POLARISED

As well as acknowledging management activities, countrysides-as-polarised reveals that these activities are specialised and isolated. The metaphor of polarisation was a powerful image brought forth during fieldwork. Polarisation also reveals conflicts between different interests, entrenched views, as well as the large numbers of organisations wishing to influence future countrysides. Polarised countrysides imply that conservation is a specialised and site-based activity, which conceals attempts to integrate, or learn from, different management activities.

Countrysides were seen to be "multi-purpose", which was seen as a catch-all phrase like 'sustainability' [h*]. Multi-purpose countrysides imply that a diversity of activities is valued, which is consistent with the tapestry metaphors. A *separation* of diverse areas of activity can lead to *polarisation*, and the activities are carried out in isolation from other activities.

Increased specialisation is revealed as one of the main causes of polarisation, particularly the intensification of agriculture. Polarisation at one extreme could lead to "ghetto" areas [g7, i13], "prairies" [i9], and "raped and pillaged (areas) ... to get production" [i13], and at the other extreme, a "museum countryside" [i13]. "Two-tiered farming" [e.g., h1], is a popular expression of polarisation (though less extreme) with the two tiers being production and conservation.

Increased specialisation did not just refer to farming, but also to conservation. Conservation as separate to farming can lead to two different areas in the countryside- those with conservation, and those without: "...there are people who would argue that we should polarise land use... and the grain production should be concentrated in areas like East Anglia where their land is good, and we should lose the landscape there and enhance the landscape elsewhere... now who's to say they're wrong!" [e6, emphasis added]. Specialisation could lead to "more areas for conservation" [h1]. Another farmer had created some (quite renowned) habitats for wetland and migratory birds, and considered his farming and conservation activities as being quite separate [b5]. A separation between farming and conservation can mean that farming operations are 'intensified' on the remaining land, because she has less total land available. This in turn leads to a 'vicious circle' of decreasing conservation benefit on the area of production, and

a polarised land area. Conservation can be considered as *polarising* when it is labelled as "projects" and conducted separately from other activities.

Policies can act to increase or decrease polarisation, by whether they take into account whole farm operations or not. Countryside Stewardship (CS) can increase polarisation by not insisting on whole farm agreements, and set-aside increases polarisation by concentrating production on certain areas of land. The effects of this concentration are magnified with some of the options within set-aside, such as 'transferable set-aside'.

A separation of activities contrasts with a desire to see countrysides as a whole, as with tapestry metaphors, and not as: "... little parcels of perfection here, with a lot of grot in between, and then another little island. We ought to be looking at the whole countryside as one" [c1]. FWAG's stated mission is to unite farming and conservation, which suggests that these activities are seen as separated in the first place (see Chapter 7). Countrysides-as-united, or *integrated*, is concealed with polarisation metaphors. Countrysides would be integrated if the different management activities (in this case farming and conservation) *informed* each other. So rather than the case above, where the farmer basically had two distinct areas on his farm, farming practices can be modified to take into account conservation goals [a1]. A simple example used by FWAG is creating better hedge habitats by not spreading fertiliser into hedge bottoms. Fertilisers influence plant species composition, and favour aggressive species at the expense of 'desirable species' such as wildflowers. Hence, efforts to not spread fertiliser imply changes to a farming operation. Farming and conservation are (more) integrated rather than seeing conservation (better hedge habitats) separate to, and polarised from, farming.

Polarisation leads to a second metaphor: countrysides-as-conflicts (for example, Lowe *et al.* 1986). Conflicts in 1995 were particularly manifest in animal welfare issues, such as live animal exports. Farmers tended to trivialise conflicts by saying that (other) people do not understand, or that they were the victims of conflict, that is, they were often attacked and criticised. I discuss both points in later sections. Conflict was seen to arise from, and be perpetuated by entrenched views [h*]. In Workshop 5, participants discussed media influences that contribute to conflict, in both a negative sense that the media sensationalised certain issues and a positive sense that the media raised awareness through such things as wildlife documentaries [h*]. Some conflict was perceived as differences in class, and it was the rich, vocal middle-class

people that affected politicians [h*]. Countrysides were often referred to as a "middle-class playground" [e.g., h5]. One workshop participant referred to class impacts as "Tory grandees" [h2], a distinct reference to private ownership.

Conflict and polarisation also revealed that there are a large number of organisations wishing to influence countrysides: "...there are so many different organisations, so interested in the countryside in its widest sense" [e7]. Lowe *et al.* (1986: 114) state that the "... *sheer variety and multiplicity of groups often bewilders observers and is not infrequently a cause for frustration for the groups themselves*". Bains (1994) lists some of the government departments and agencies involved in the countryside, and calls for a strategic review as they are too 'discordant' and chaotic. Two implications of many organisations are that they are in conflict, and also that: "... (farmers) are bombarded by lots of organisations" [e2] and there are "too many people telling us (farmers) what to do" [d9]. One farmer supported the first idea, that these organisations were in conflict: "...there is conflict at the edges of lots of different organisations which really have got very similar aims..." [e7]. This may be countered by a 'product differentiation' argument, which implies that these organisations, even if they are trying to do similar things, are aiming for different 'customers' and hence are not in conflict (Dalton 1994). One person wondered whether there were a lot of people in organisations that saw involvement in countrysides as a "means to perpetuate their own job" [h3].

Many organisations were seen to be confrontational, and the Rambler's Association was highlighted as an organisation that takes a confrontational approach by demanding that farmers provide access and rights of way footpaths:

"they're vocal out of all proportion...they're not the majority, but they're the most vocal, and therefore they sound like the majority, and it's very easy to get the wrong view, because it is put across... like the person that shouts the loudest is not always the one that is right" [d2].

An implication of there being many organisations was that: "...a lot of farmers too are on committees... if you're really interested in the land, and what goes on, you sort of get pounced upon to be on committees, and voice your opinion through that..." [e2]. This point is pursued in Chapter 6, as it effects the farm-as-a business. Time spent on these committees decreased the amount of time on the "core" business [e.g., i7]. It raises an interesting point though about whether these

organisations are a platform for people to be involved in countrysides issues, or whether there is too much conflict and this decreases 'effective participation'.

Table 5.2 outlines some of the organisations that emerged during this research, particularly during the interviewing phase held at The 1995 Royal Show. This table indicates the expressed aims and ways of working of these organisations, their espoused metaphors and links to metaphors discussed in this chapter.

5.3.6 COUNTRYSIDES-AS-NOT UNDERSTOOD

This cluster of metaphors flows on from the discussion of the conflict metaphors. I discuss it separately as it was so dominant in interactions with farmers, who believed that there was a gulf of understanding between them and people trying to tell them what to do. In their view, these people did not understand countrysides, or farming's roles. The metaphor reveals perceptions of fear, countrysides as being an alien place, understandings being superficial, and it was used to justify a need for education so that countrysides could be understood. This metaphor conceals assumptions that some people do understand (especially farmers), and that their view is right.

"Urban dweller" or "townie" were general labels for a group of people that did not understand the ways of the countrysides or of farming [i6] yet were vocal about what should occur in the countrysides. But it was not town people *per se* that were blamed, rather it was two groups of people: incomers (newcomers) and commuters. Incomers refers to: "... (a) most vocal section, middle management type of people, (who) moved out of urban areas into what they see as a village. (It is) fast becoming that they are the only ones that can afford to live in it" [i13]. 'Commuters' might be included with this group. but they were seen as people that commuted to major cities for work, and who were thus away from villages and the countryside during the day (and who also tended to draw their entertainment from the cities).

Table 5.2 Organisations apparent in farming and countryside

Organisation (alphabetical)	Aims and ways of working	Espoused metaphors of countryside (countrysides-as-...)	Links to my clusters of farming and countryside metaphors
A) Voluntary			
Associated Councils of Rural England (ACRE)	* "empowering local communities"	* including "people" issues	* countrysides-as-a tapestry * farming-as-part of rural communities
British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC)	* shooting organisation * represent members	* conserving habitats	* countrysides-as-experienced; -as-managed; -as-wildlife habitats
Country Landowners Association (CLA)	* represent landowners * lobby * legal advice	* managed by landowners	* countrysides-as-managed * farming-as-a business
The Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)	* protect and prevent ill-considered developments * lobby	* protected	* countrysides-as-records
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)	* unite farming and conservation * advise farmers * promote environmentally responsible farming	* integrating farming and conservation * farmland-as-a habitat	* countrysides-as-managed; -as-wildlife habitats * farming-as-a business
Farmers World Network (FWN)	* network farmers globally	* a network	* farmers-as-part of a rural community
Game Conservancy (GC)	* research * advisory	* game habitats	* countrysides-as-wildlife habitats
Linking the Environment and Farming (LEAF)	* demonstration farms * research * environmental audits * promote 'integrated crop management'	* linking farming and the environment	* countrysides-as-managed * farming-as-production
Less Intensive Farming for the Environment (LIFE)	* research * demonstration farm	* less intensively farmed	* farming-as-production; -as-stewardship
National Council for Voluntary Orgns (NCVO)	* fund voluntary organisations	* including "people" issues	* farming-as-part of rural communities
National Farmers Union (NFU)	* protect and promote interests of farmers * educate members * insurance	* stewarded * vibrant and viable	* countrysides-as-managed * farming-as-stewardship; -as-a business
The Rambler's Association (RA)	* promote informal recreation * enforce rights of way	* open access (cf. "rights to roam")	* countrysides-as-experienced; -as-conflict
Rural Community Councils (RCC) (Warwicks)	* promote rural communities	* including "people" issues	* farming-as-part of rural communities
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	* own and manage reserves * lobby	* bird habitats * farmland-as-an important habitat	* countrysides-as-wildlife habitats, -as-managed; -as-polarised
Wildlife Trusts ¹ (WT) (Warwicks)	* own and manage reserves * lobby	* wildlife habitats	* countrysides-as-wildlife habitats, -as-managed; -as-polarised

Table 5.2 Organisations apparent in farming and countrysides (Continued)

Organisation (alphabetical)	Aims and ways of working	Espoused metaphors of countrysides (countrysides-as-...)	Links to my clusters of farming and countrysides metaphors
B) Government departments and agencies			
Agricultural Development and Advisory Service ² (ADAS)	* commercial - advice to farmers * research * statutory (from MAFF) * manage Environmentally Sensitive Areas	* farmed	* countrysides-as-managed * farming-as-production
The Countryside Commission (CoCo)	* improve public access and understanding * fund schemes * demonstration farms	open and accessible	* countrysides-as-experienced
Department of the Environment (DoE)	* secure consistency of policy with respect to the use and development of land.	* regulated	* countrysides-as-managed; -as-a wildlife habitat
English Nature (EN)	* promote wildlife and the natural landscape	* wildlife habitats	* countrysides-as-managed; -as-a wildlife habitat
LINK (Dept. Trade and Industry research initiative)	* research into 'integrated farming systems'	* farmed	* countrysides-as-managed * farming-as-production
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF)	* formulate and administer agricultural policy	* balancing farming and conservation	* countrysides-as-managed * farming-as-production
National Rivers Authority (NRA) ³	* "guardians of the water environment"	* protected * regulated	* countrysides-as-managed
Rural Development Corporation	* fund RCCs * work with planners * regenerate local areas	* rural communities	* farming-as-part of a rural community
C) Commercial organisations interviewed			
Sainsburys	* food retailer * advance 'integrated crop management'	* farmed	* countrysides-as-managed * farming-as-a business; -as-production
Strutt & Parker	* land agents	* conservation-as-an extra activity	* farming-as-a business; -as-production

Sources: Interviews held at the Royal show, promotional material, organisations mentioned by farmers during fieldwork, and Blunden and Curry (1985)

Notes:

1. Comes under the banner of Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RNSC)
2. The commercial and advisory arm of ADAS is in the process of being privatised
3. Now merged with HM Inspectorate for Pollution

Other organisations not included:

Friends of the Earth (FoE); Local Authorities (County Councils), National Parks Authority, Agriculture & Allied Workers Trade Union, Young Farmers, Womens Institute (WI); Family Farmers Association, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), British Association for Nature Conservation (BANC), National Trust, The SAFE Alliance, Rural Voice, Common Ground, The Forestry Commission

One farmer stated that most of the population of England are completely divorced from farming [e5]. This caused problems when farmers wanted to get on with 'normal' farming practices. One story described this lack of understanding:

"... (one) farmer down in the valley was absolutely horrified the summer before last when we had a new couple moved in alongside his farm, and they COMPLAINED. We had a long wet spell, and he was working on silage, and the weather changed for the better, and they complained that he was working on silage- tractors and trailers were going up his drive after 9:00 at night! And he was disturbing their peace in the countryside, and that was what they had come here for!" [d2].

Another common complaint was against 'smells' [d1]. Incomers also used houses that were originally used for agriculture [d9], which were only available because of the decrease of agricultural workers. Demand by incomers led to a problem of high property prices, which was seen to exclude young people from buying houses in villages [d9].

A lack of understanding was caused because these people had a sanitised [i6], chocolate-boxy [i13] and idealised [i13] view of countrysides: "... they don't like anything to be nasty in any shape or form. They will not accept that nature is red-blooded and tooth and claw. There is nothing nice about nature. You can't sanitise it and pretend it doesn't exist..." [i5]. Also that people "...have this annoying habit of thinking the countryside as being furry bunnies and hedges... but a lot they don't think about, fungi and insects, and all the things you don't like... yet they're equally part of the environment" [i13].

A lack of understanding was also caused by "...Joe Public doesn't understand what we are doing when we are managing the land for food production or for leisure and environment. We need somehow to educate them... they don't understand the slow growth of the environment..." [i14]. They also "...don't realise that nature has a death... because it is not in their lifetime" [i6]. Another farmer commented that " a little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing", as people wanted oak woodlands but did not take into account that you could not just plant oak seedlings and end up with a wood [i4]. The assumption is that if they did understand, then they would not make such an issue of countrysides. Countrysides-as-a townie issue is a metaphor that captures these both these assumptions and links to metaphors of conflict.

It was not just a lack of understanding, but people were seen to have double standards: "...they've got their own individual aspirations of what they see as the countryside... I think sometimes they think we should be sort of in smocks and chew straws and lean on gates and go around with horses and carts. But they still want to drive their luxurious car, have electricity and all, there seems to be, we suffer from a double standard" [i6]. This double standard was manifest in relation to: "... things like garden chemicals, the use of chain saws, and so on... legislation that we have to abide by, but they don't" [i14].

A different group of people also highlighted as not understanding, were planners. Two farmers related attempts to build cottages on their farms, but being thwarted by planners. One wanted to be able to live on the farm, but his parents lived in the main farmhouse. Permission to build a house was denied. He complained that they should be able to see he was a genuine farmer and that it affected his farming by not being able to live on the farm [e3]. Another complained that: "people tell us what we should be doing, but have very little knowledge of what is all involved... but unless we do (put dwellings up) how do we keep children on the farm..." [d9].

One farmer told of a commercial venture which can be seen as a positive attempt to bridge this perceived lack of understanding [e9]. He held Open Lambing Days where people came onto the farm to watch lambing. 4000 visitors came last year, and he has plans to expand. A comment against this sort of attempt was that what was being demonstrated was necessarily 'artificial' [e6]. For example, to ensure that 'the public' would see at least one lambing in a two hour period (supposedly the average length of stay for visitors), then ewes were treated with hormones to ensure times of lambing. However, the 'artificial' comment probably related more to 'most farmers are too busy for this', and that it was not 'proper farming'.

'Education' was revealed as the general way of bridging this gap in understandings: "... it's educating people into the management of the countryside, and what we're trying to do" [i13]. Both farmers and FWAG advisers explored education in Workshops 5 and 6 (Figure 5.2). Farmers tended to concentrate on educating the public, particularly school children, whilst FWAG saw a need to be educating the farmers. Figure 5.2 was prepared as part of a report to the participants of both workshops, and I included an additional section (marked 'DavidM') where I tried to stimulate reflection on a distinction between education as "we educate them" or "we can learn from each other".

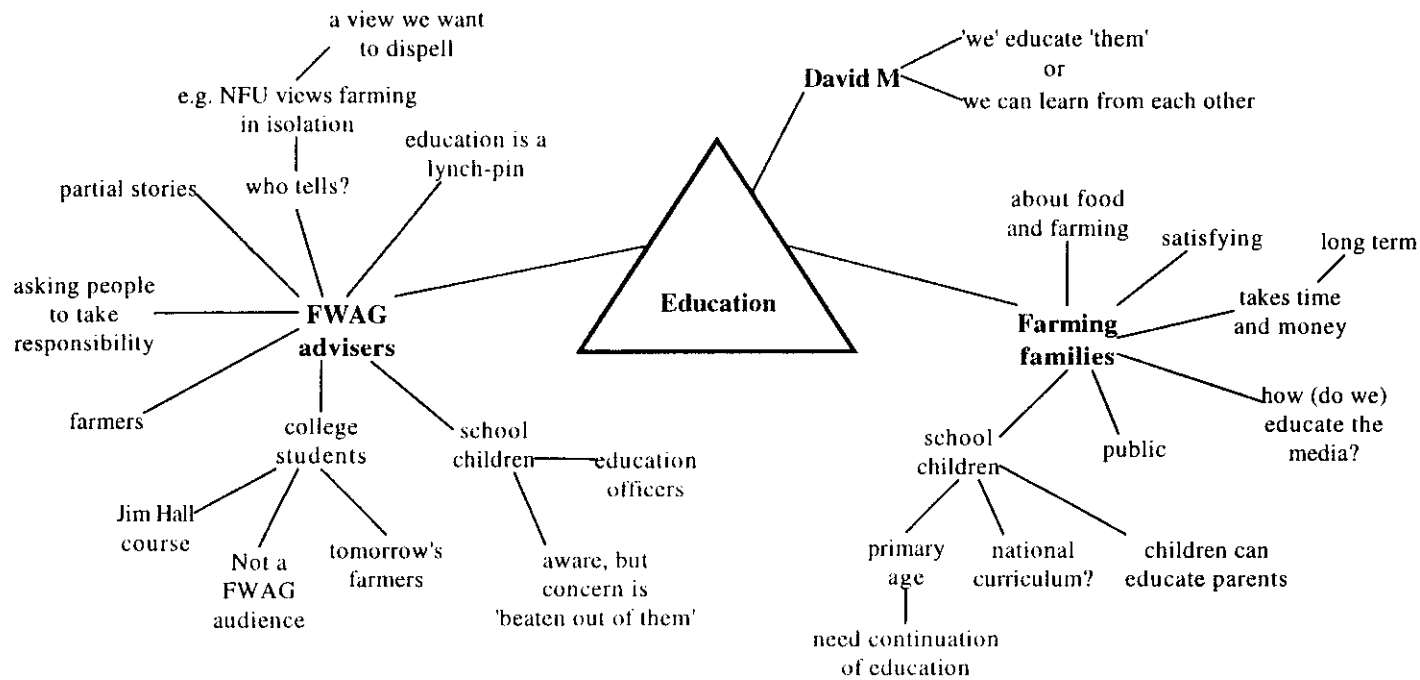


Figure 5.2 A contrast between the perceptions of education held by farming families, FWAG advisers and this author, based on explorations in Workshops 5 and 6.

Other aspects revealed by metaphors of not understanding were that people were afraid of farming and countrysides [i7, h4]; that it was perceived by urban people as an alien place [h5]; and that views were superficial: "I think the general public are very sensitive to anything that doesn't look right... whether they understand it or not" [i6]. I have discussed similar aspects under the metaphor of countrysides-as-a-tapestry.

One important aspect that this metaphor conceals are the assumptions that 'we know what is right' and 'we do understand'. I do not intend to discuss these assumptions here: my whole thesis can be considered such a discussion.

Countrysides-as-not understood also conceals aspects usually associated with 'towns' such as health and transport. One person claimed that 'people issues' were excluded when emphasis was placed on 'farming': "... it puts a particular slant that inevitably ignores all other things..." [j5, NCVO]. I discuss this in the next chapter, when I consider aspects regarding rural communities. One further aspect concealed by this metaphor was that "for many people, the countryside is bottom of their priorities, the most important thing for them is just surviving" [h5]. An image associated with towns, a theatre, was used to contrast this perceived low priority: "... I would say it is a bit like the theatre, nobody ever uses it, but they wouldn't want it to disappear" [h1].

5.3.7 COUNTRYSIDES-AS-A WILDLIFE HABITAT

This metaphor was highlighted during fieldwork, especially by members of FWAG and advisers. The metaphor can be seen as inappropriate with respect to the discussion of Human Activity Systems: social and cultural issues are concealed. The metaphor can be linked to other metaphors discussed, such as:

- countrysides-as-meanings (as wildlife habitat is one particular meaning);
- countrysides-as-managed (one particular management activity); and
- countrysides-as-a tapestry (via interconnected habitats).

The metaphor reveals aspects relating to ecology and "wholeness", such as: wildlife corridors, viable habitats, and creating and maintaining habitats. The metaphor also reveals conservation activities, and debates such as whether conservation should focus on rare or common species (cf. Mabey 1993).

Most discussion of this metaphor came from FWAG advisers, who were keen to see that "...wildlife habitat (has) to be considered an integral part of local and national planning..." [h3] and "not stuck on the shirt-tails of everything else" [h1]. However, this conceals a view that: "... we wouldn't AIM to create wildlife habitats, but we perhaps would aim for a sustainable agriculture. Now a knock-on effect of that might be better wildlife habitats" [h2]. This metaphor underlined a lot of FWAG's activities, and is further discussed in Chapter 7.

5.4 Judging appropriate, disabling and alternative metaphors

Exploring metaphors enables judgements to be made as to what understandings they give to a certain research context. An additional reason for making judgements is to make certain that my preferences are not being concealed behind the framework that is applied consistently to each metaphor. To deny my own preferences would be a variation on the 'detached' researcher theme, and negate my desire to move to 'co-research' where people can learn from each other.

Of the seven clusters, three metaphors stand out as being appropriate, that is, able to trigger new understandings or different metaphors:

- countrysides-as-a tapestry;
- countrysides-as-meanings; and
- countrysides-as-polarised.

One reason for judging tapestry metaphors to be appropriate is that, in the workshops, the metaphors were particularly associated with 'rich' and free-flowing discussions. These discussions did not get bogged down in 'we are right' and 'others are to blame' accusations, which at times can be counterproductive. The explorations also highlighted some important issues of diversity and relationships, which can in turn be explored *as* metaphors⁵. I was particularly satisfied that the explorations considered epistemological issues such as 'the position of the observer', and I think that simple metaphors such as *tapestry* have an ability to make these issues assessable to a wide range of people. *Tapestry* allows understandings of, for example, 'smells' that do not focus so much on 'visual' aspects of countrysides.

⁵ exploring diversity in terms of metaphors would entail bringing-forth metaphors in the form 'diversity-as-Y'.

I judged countrysides-as-meaning as appropriate on the basis that it reveals that we *ascribe* meanings. Attention can then turn to 'what meanings are ascribed?', 'who is ascribing them?', and 'are people aware of, and able to consider, other possible meanings?'. I also judge that the metaphor of countrysides-as-experienced, within the overall cluster, can also lead to different understandings. At this point, I am presented with an operational difficulty when judging if clusters of metaphors are appropriate or not. I do not judge countrysides-as-records to be as able to trigger different insights as the other two metaphors within the cluster. This suggests that judgements should be made on the basis of individual metaphors rather than clusters. For the time being, I continue to judge clusters and just mention individual exceptions. It is an issue worthy of further reflection.

The other metaphor that I judged to be appropriate is countrysides-as-polarised. Of all the metaphors explored, I felt that this one had the most potential to lead to different understandings. The metaphor focuses attention on *our* particular activities, whether they are carried out in isolation, and whether there is any scope to learn from different activities. Learning from different activities seems well suited to researching *with* people, and creating space for different understandings. The metaphor also effectively raises ethical dimensions of how we could or should be acting to trigger different sorts of countrysides. On a separate note, the metaphor enabled me to better appreciate the significance of FWAG considering farming and conservation as integrated. *Polarised* metaphors add coherence to attempts to reflect on farming practices to take into account environmental issues, as well as focusing on 'ordinary and everyday' countrysides rather than on specialised conservation areas or projects.

One aspect of polarised metaphors that I do not judge to be appropriate regards *conflict*. Indeed, I judge conflict metaphors as being *disabling*. Parts of discussions and fieldwork that I did not think were very productive occurred when conflict and blame were highlighted. Blame can be productive in a therapeutic 'release' and 'getting things off your chest', or as a way of 'laying your cards on the table' and making views transparent. However, a process of considering different metaphors can allow for that, without denigrating into blame and 'we are right' scenarios.

I judged two clusters as being disabling:

- countrysides-as-not understood; and
- countrysides-as-wildlife habitats.

The idea that "we educate them" seems especially disabling, even though I certainly sympathise with farmers' frustrations that they are being instructed to do 'unreasonable' things by people who do not have to bear the consequences of those actions. Looking for ways to 'bridge' gaps in understanding also seems trapped in ToT type notions, rather than working *with* people. I recognise that a counter-argument is that some people do not want to work with others, but in which case, they are unlikely to be exploring different metaphors anyway.

The second disabling metaphor is countrysides-as-wildlife habitats, unless humans were to be considered wildlife. But even then, it would ignore 'the observer' and 'the actor'. The metaphor is useful to have as a "foil" (cf. Rorty's 1989 phrase), and exploring the metaphor can lead to learning. However, the metaphor has little potential beyond that and other metaphors might be more exciting to consider further.

These judgements as to appropriate or disabling metaphors did not include two clusters: *managed* and *changing*. Implicitly I have judged these as being worthwhile to explore but, on the basis of my experiences in this research, only have limited potential to trigger different understandings. Two aspects of the *managed* metaphor are explicitly disabling: countrysides being 'out there' to be managed, and connotations of control. However, management can be seen as *action* that farmers and others are immersed in, and it can be seen in a non-manipulative sense. The metaphor also counters a damaging notion that 'we *can* leave it alone, and we should', which effectively excludes people from the picture. Also, I agree with several comments that a lot of so-called environmental damage is (partially) due to 'neglect'. For these reasons, I am reluctant to describe the cluster as disabling. Countrysides-as-changing does not seem explicitly disabling. Rather than invoke a new type of explicit judgement, I will leave these metaphors *as if* they are unjudged.

I propose two alternative metaphors, that is, metaphors that I think can contribute to understandings of future countrysides:

- countrysides-as-networks of conversation; and
- countrysides-as-potpourri.

These alternative metaphors are proposed in addition to the two preliminary metaphors that I discussed: countrysides-as-metaphorical and countrysides-as-human activity systems.

The first metaphor is drawn in particular from Goolishian and Winderman (1988) who, in the context of family therapy and psychotherapy, talk of "networks of communicated meanings". They imply that a family can be seen as people participating in a certain network, and that the network constructs itself (cf. Maturana and Varela 1987). A therapist can not change the networks or the conversation, but can act in a certain way to *create a space for change*.

The relevance of seeing countrysides in this way, is that emphasis is quite clearly on relationships, conversations and 'spaces' for conversations. For a researcher, emphasis shifts to facilitating and creating space for these conversations and networks. The links with certain metaphors of research that I discussed in Chapter 3 should be apparent, as well as to Rorty's (1980) aim to *continue conversations* rather than point out truths.

Kersten (1995: 218) concludes that certain sorts of conditions enhance, or restrict, the emergence of dialogue (or space for conversation). These include:

- whether people speak as individuals or as representatives;
- whether time is spent developing relationships;
- whether people are willing to explore other ideas (or metaphors); and
- whether people felt they had been invited to participate or forced to.

I discuss in later chapters whether *metaphors* can be used to create a space for 'networks of conversations', and hence if metaphors can be added to Kersten's list. Countrysides-as-networks of conversation conceals conflict, and a possibility that different discourses and metaphors might well be incommensurable. The metaphor also conceals dynamic forms of networks. Despite this, I propose this metaphor as an alternative metaphor worthy of further exploration. [Please note that I am not proposing that people adopt the metaphor, rather that it can become a site for reflection on how future countrysides can emerge].

The second metaphor, countrysides-as-potpourri, comes from Morgan (1988). The metaphor follows on from my discussion of countrysides-as-polarised, and the advantages of reflecting on how activities can inform one another. I consider *potpourri* to be light-hearted and a little more unusual than the 'serious' discussions in this chapter. Whereas integration implies that the different activities fit closely together, *potpourri* reveals that activities are loose, random, *blended* and diverse, yet do not cancel each other out. Thus,

potpourri is neither an integration nor a separation of activities. The metaphor conceals that 'the scent' wears off after a while, but this probably just suggests potency comes from 'fresh' ingredients (which does not necessarily mean 'new'). The more limiting aspect of the metaphor is our old friend, the 'external' actor, who mixes the ingredients. However, this can still provide a site for discussion and learning in the same way that tapestry metaphors can.

I display the judgements made in this section in Table 5.3. This table presents a summary of the clusters of metaphors brought forth, explored and judged in this chapter. As such, although it is a static 'snapshot', the table can give an overview of how *Images of Countrysides* contributed to my understanding of the research context. This understanding does not include explicit metaphors of farming and FWAG: these are discussed in the next two chapters.

Table 5.3 Metaphor clusters in Chapter 5 that were brought forth, explored and judged to gain an understanding of future countrysides

Metaphor cluster Countrysides-as-...	Key points revealed	Judgement (appropriate, disabling or alternative)
metaphorical	* many metaphors possible	(implicitly) alternative
human activity systems	* human actions, participation and purposes	(implicitly) alternative
tapestry	* diversity * excludes observer	appropriate
meanings	* we ascribe meaning	appropriate
changing	* dynamic aspects	-
managed	* intervention * control * activity	- (possibly disabling)
polarised	* separation of activities	appropriate
not understood	* farmers' accusation	disabling
wildlife habitat	* ecology	disabling
networks of conversation	* conditions for conversation * relationships	alternative
potpourri	* diverse and blended activities	alternative

5.5 Reflections on Chapter 5

The chapter is quite long and detailed, but I did not want to edit either the breadth or depth of the discussion more than I have. I thought it important to display what sort of understanding a focus on metaphors could give to a diverse stakeholder context such as countrysides. Part of the detail arises from incorporating a literature review, fieldwork data as well as analysis into the same chapter. I offer the overview to help a reader pick and choose the metaphors and aspects that he or she is interested in pursuing.

Some of the metaphors appear 'obvious' or uncontroversial. I maintain that learning opportunities are still available if the framework is applied to these metaphors, even if only to make certain taken-for-granted assumptions explicit and to encourage looking at different possibilities. I am also reminded of a quote from Rorty: "*...every sparkling metaphor requires a lot of stodgy literal talk (as it's foil)*" (1989: 42). Not every metaphor will be sparkling, especially as I claim that metaphors are everyday and unnoticed as such.

One of the main aspects that I want to reflect on regards the *judgements*. They added an extra dimension to exploring metaphors, and hence I think they can contribute to an understanding of future countrysides. I am quite comfortable with taking responsibility for the judgements, and I acknowledge that other people may disagree with them. I would be interested in what sorts of judgements co-researchers make about these metaphors, as it would both be a reflection on my interpretations and also it would indicate that my judgements have contributed to a process or dialogue. The implication that 'judgements mark the end of a process' was my single most uncomfortable point in the chapter. One decision was especially difficult: was countrysides-as-managed disabling or not? A second difficult decision was whether to leave *managed* and *changing* metaphors without a judgement, whether to allocate them to one judgement or the other, or whether to create a new judgement? If the judgements are part of a process, then these decisions are not difficult: further discussion is OK. I suggest that it is useful to see the judgements as part of a process; which perhaps comes close to why I responded to the thesis question in five ways, and not just one or two. Perhaps instead of the word 'judgements', I should look to an alternative word or phrase: something like 'distinguishing between metaphors' might be an option.

An interesting issue for further research is to clarify what sorts of judgements co-researchers make, either with my exploration of metaphors with the framework, or without. I include co-researcher judgements, in later chapters, within a process of jointly exploring metaphors and considering 'moving between metaphors'. This will become more apparent in Chapter 10.

One reflection regarding the framework is that I have assumed that it is valid to discuss revealed and concealed aspects under one metaphor, when it is questionable whether the speaker or author was using that metaphor or not. I can not think of any examples where I have done this, and I have tried to indicate contexts for quotes. However, I raise it as a general issue of concern.

The framework was consistently applied to each of the metaphor clusters. Part of the power of this framework is that potentially, an unlimited number of metaphors can be analysed in this way. In a pragmatic sense though, there seems a limit to the number of metaphors that could be brought forth and explored during a certain period of time. Further, exploring too many metaphors rapidly leads to "saturation", which defeats the purposes of using metaphors as a *practical* basis for working with people. This suggests that more attention should be directed to processes such as clustering, diagramming and other ways of dealing with a large number of metaphors.

The next two chapters explore images of farming and images of FWAG: two other components of the research context.

Chapter 6 Images of farming: understanding the research context II

This chapter is the second of the three chapters outlining how metaphors gave an understanding of the research context. Farming is one of the major activities within UK countrysides, and hence exploring images of farming is highly relevant to understanding the research context. A further reason for exploring images of farming is that I chose to work with farming families, and their day-to-day activities and issues of concern acted as *windows* into future countrysides. Exploring farming is a way to make these windows transparent. Two other reasons for writing this chapter are:

- it acknowledges my background, interests and motivations in agricultural research and working with farmers; and
- it seems consistent with my espoused aim of working *with* people, to acknowledge explicitly their primary activities and (perhaps) interests.

Images of farming is structured in a similar way to the previous chapter. I provide an overview of the metaphors brought forth in the research, explore these through their revealed and concealed aspects, and judge which metaphors are appropriate, disabling and alternative. In the overview, I also indicate links between the farming and countrysides metaphors: that is, which countrysides metaphors are *embodied* by the farming metaphors.

6.1 An overview of metaphors brought forth, and countrysides metaphors embodied

Diagramming and constructing tables were again used to deal with the large number of metaphors brought forth during the research (Figure 6.1 and Table 6.1). The figure and table can be interpreted in the same way as those in the overview of Chapter 5, and the overview can also act as a guide to the content of each sub-section.

However, there are two extra points that are important to discuss. The first is that I have mixed metaphors of farming and metaphors of farmers (or farming families). The first represents an activity, and the second a person or people

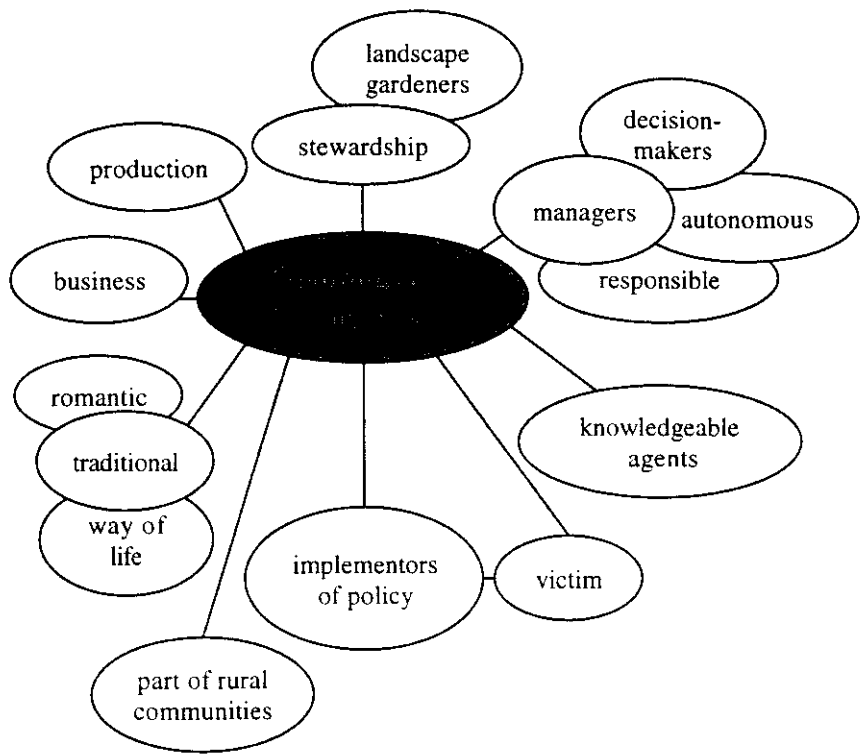


Figure 6.1 Relationships between metaphors of farming brought forth in the research

Table 6.1 An overview of metaphors of farming brought forth in the research

Metaphor (cluster) Farming-as-... Farmers-as-...	Main source(s)	Reveals	Conceals	Related metaphors Farming-as-... Farmers-as-...
Production	literature	* specialisation * polarisation * factory farming * the CAP policy * alternative commodities	* nature as 'out there' * culture * consumers, public, producers elsewhere	(linked with business)
Stewardship	literature	* custodians and caretakers * farmers enact conservation * different conservation metaphors	* enthusiasms * constraints (economic and policy) * 'neatness'	* park-keepers * landscape gardeners * a kind of public servant * conservation-as-a hobby
Business	literature, fieldwork	* economic factors * business constraints * controls and regulations * "prosperity thesis" * farmers as part of a chain	* stewardship * enthusiasms * responsibility	* long term
Cyclical	fieldwork	* different seasons * production cycles * business cycles * (non-linear)	* disruptions * technical change	
Responsible and autonomous	fieldwork	* decisions made by farmers * individuality * "the voluntary principle" * private property rights	* regulations and constraints	* in control
Managers and decision makers	literature, fieldwork	* decision making * farmers in control * a view that unencumbered = better	* regulations and constraints	
Knowledgeable-agent	literature	* farmers' role in countryside * 'innovators' * information sources	* ToT assumptions * time and constraints	* active researchers

**Table 6.1 An overview of metaphors of farming brought forth in the research
(Continued)**

Metaphor (cluster) Farming-as-... Farmers-as-...	Main source(s)	Reveals	Conceals	Related metaphors Farming-as-... Farmers-as-...
Implementors of policy	theory, literature	* subsidies and support * policies and regulations * cross-compliance	* enthusiasms * decision makers * policy making separated from implementation	
Victim	fieldwork	* criticisms * inappropriate policies * farmers a minority * rural crime * high 'suicide' rates * media influences	* 'choice' * autonomy * farms as dangerous places	* enacting a pantomime * double standards
Traditional	fieldwork	* conservatism * domination by older generation * farming is hard to enter * long term aspects	* male orientation * alternative practices	
Romantic	literature, fieldwork	* "rural idyll" * jealousy * respect * enthusiasms	* local people's issues * public not understanding	* idealised
A way of life	literature, fieldwork	* a place to live and work * 'meaning'	* business aspects * policy aspects	
A part of a rural community	fieldwork	* networks (cf. isolation) * country dwellers * local community issues and action	* low numbers of farmers * outside business * lack of communication	* employers of labour
Landscape gardeners	literature, fieldwork	* farmers shape the land	* business aspects * production * farming as a way of life	(see stewardship)

who conduct the activities. I do not see any conflict in mixing people and activities, especially as we are 'thrown' or immersed in activities anyway (cf. Gadamer 1975).

The second point is that metaphors of farming embody certain metaphors of countrysides, and indicating which metaphors can contribute to understanding future countrysides. Three metaphors of countrysides are embodied by farming:

- countrysides-as-managed, as farming is one activity within countrysides. Note that this reifies an image of farmers-as-managers;
- countrysides-as-changing, as changes in farming have been linked to changes in countrysides; and
- countrysides-as-not understood, as this was a claim made especially by farmers and also it was farming in particular that was seen as not being understood.

6.2 Images of farming

In this section, I explore eight clusters of metaphors in terms of what aspects are revealed and concealed:

- farming-as-production;
- farming-as-stewardship;
- farming-as-a business;
- farmers-as-autonomous;
- farmers-as-implementors of policy;
- farmers-as-victims;
- farming-as-traditional; and
- farmers-as-members of the local community.

I have used an appendix to supplement the exploration of farmers-as-implementors of policy. Appendix 1 outlines three policies that act as windows to understanding farming and future countrysides: Set-aside, Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs).

6.2.1 FARMING-AS-PRODUCTION

Metaphors of farming as the production of food were very dominant, both in the literature and during fieldwork. Food production was described as "the fundamental" of farming [i14], though many extend production to include both food and fibre. Farming-as-production reveals methods of production, especially specialised, intensive and 'scientific' methods. The metaphor of *factory farming* follows from this increased specialisation. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is revealed as a major force for increasing production. Other aspects revealed include producing 'commodities' other than food, such as 'producing a view'. The cluster of metaphors conceals social and cultural aspects of farming, and also how countrysides are reduced to being a source of production inputs and a sink for outputs. Farming was seen to have a role to "feed the world" [i7], and this concealed consumers, 'the public', and also producers in other countries.

The dominance of the metaphor of farming as food production has historical roots in the post-war food shortages that gripped the UK and other European states (see, for example, the commentary by Seddon 1989; and Bishops and Phillips 1993). Farmers were considered 'heroes' for managing to feed Britain during this period, and hence had a high social status [i9]. One farmer saw that the ability to feed people was even more significant because of pre-war events. Before the war, English farming was in a depression, particularly because of the reliance on cheap imports from Commonwealth countries [i6]. The "land was derelict, (and a) farmer had no incentive... but people just tried to hang on. And then suddenly the war came, and then we've suddenly become a popular race of people" [i6].

Blunden and Curry (1988: 1) outline a consequence of the food shortages, that: "*central to all government policies since the war has been the notion that all agricultural land was sacrosanct*". In particular, two pieces of legislation that enshrine production metaphors stand out: the '1947 Agricultural Act' which paved the way for agricultural subsidies; and the '1947 Town and Country Planning Act', which gave precedence of agricultural land over other potential uses (especially urban 'encroachment'). The latter Act also gave rise to the notion of local planning- or planning by local authorities. Marsden *et al.* (1993) summarise this dominant ideology as farmers-as-supported (through agricultural policies) and farmers-as-protected (through planning policy).

The 1947 Agricultural Act laid the foundations for a series of subsidies aimed at increasing production. There are too many to list here, and the reader is referred to Body (1984) for a discussion of these. These subsidies reveal the emphasis on increasing production. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was seen as the major policy framework for increasing production after Britain joined the Common Market (now EU) in 1972. The CAP is blamed for much of the environmental destruction that I outlined in Chapter 5, because of this focus on increasing production. Almost all commentators regard the CAP as inappropriate: Body (1984) and Blunden and Curry (1988) outline how the main beneficiaries of the CAP were the larger farmers, and how this led to overproduction. The CAP conceals distortions on world trade and adverse effects on 'third world countries'. Lowe *et al.* (1986) outline the workings of the CAP, and how it has led to overcapitalisation in agriculture and high land prices. Indeed the CAP was seen as so successful at raising production, that it led to surpluses, and mountains (particularly of grain and butter). Farmers spoke of these mountains as "a pantry" [i7], "two months supply" and that it was largely media influences that made them into "monsters" [i13]. In 1984 milk quotas had to be introduced to both cut food surpluses and also the escalating costs. Bishop and Phillips (1993: 317) see the 1984 quotas as "... *the dawn of a new era of continuing agricultural policy reform*".

This 'new dawn' was continued with the 1986 Agricultural Act, in which the remit of MAFF was no longer seen solely in terms of production, or efficiency of agricultural industry, but instead had to achieve a balance between: agriculture, economic and social interests; conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty; and the promotion of enjoyment of the countryside by the public (Bishop and Phillips 1993; Blunden and Curry 1988; and MAFF 1994). Mabey (1993: viii) claims that overproduction:

"sparked off what (an) ecological argument failed to achieve by itself- an acceptance that intensive, indiscriminate agriculture could no longer have first or best claim over the land".

Instead of production, Potter (1990) suggests that the CAP could aim to promote farm survival. Reforms in 1992 (after the MacSharry proposals and also prompted by GATT negotiations) shifted the basis of support from subsidised prices to direct payments, indicating that the CAP could be seen as a social policy. Potter outlines how farm survival was considered by Mansholt in 1968 to restructure the farming industry: to buy-out marginal producers and

consolidate other viable holdings. Changes in structure are seen as one cause of environmental destruction (Potter and Lobley 1993). Potter (1990: 4) sees the Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) scheme, discussed in Appendix 1, as "... *the clearest recognition yet that it may be necessary to preserve the structure and pattern of farming in an area if conservation goals are to be met*". A lot of people call for the further reform of the CAP, and a "de-coupling" of support away from production mechanisms.

In addition to policies aimed at increasing production, this cluster of metaphors also reveals the specialisation and intensification of farming. Very few farmers in the research were 'mixed' farmers; most had specialised into either arable or livestock farmers. Production could now be seen as "a factory" [i6], with aims of increasing yields and decreasing costs. Specialisation reflects 'scientific approaches' to farming: what Body (1984: 15) describes as "*top gear farming*". One implication of specialisation though, was that farmers had "tended to drift further and further away from each others as farmers" [i4]. This contributed to a perceived isolation of farmers, and also conflicts between farmers: "... there is no such thing as a farmer. The pig farmer is sometimes opposite to the cereal farmer, because he wants cheap cereals... (hence we) can't put up a united argument" [i9]. Isolation and conflicts are concealed by production metaphors.

Metaphors of production reveal a "produced commodity". Most of the analysis so far has been in terms of the production of food. Fibre production is also important. However, one modification that has grabbed the attention particularly of economists in the 1980's and 1990's, has been to consider the production of public CARE goods (see Potter 1990; Colman 1994). CARE goods are "Conservation Amenity and Rural Environment" goods, and refer to goods that can be "*consumed*" by the public, such as 'enjoying a view', or 'walking through the countryside'. These goods are considered *joint* products by Potter (1990), which indicates that food production has not been displaced completely. Potter also questions whether farmers "... *possess sufficient motivation, experience and skills to become producers of CARE goods*" (ibid., p4).

Explorations of two clusters of metaphors, *stewardship* and *rural communities*, highlight social and environmental concerns; these aspects are concealed by production metaphors. Rather than discuss these aspects in two places, I refer the reader to those sub-sections. Writers and participants rarely discuss these

aspects *as part of* production, which is a tribute to how reified and accepted *production* metaphors are when farming is described.

6.2.2 FARMING-AS-STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship metaphors make up a second dominant cluster, and these metaphors were initially brought forth from the literature. Stewardship metaphors reveal aspects of "taking care of the land", although this is a role that has been questioned. Stewardship metaphors reveal that it is principally farmers that enact conservation, and that *conservation* is a practical action (as compared to an abstract concept of "countrysides"). I outline different metaphors of conservation and, in particular, one metaphor that emerged from Workshop 1: conservation-as-a hobby. Aspects concealed by stewardship metaphors include farmers' enthusiasms, economic and policy constraints that impede stewardship, and a desire to see a 'neat' countryside (Rackham 1987).

Stewardship revolves around a principle that it is farmers who are custodians of, and take care of countrysides: "... *it's farmers who know what's best for the countryside... because of their work and location they (know) nature where urban people did not*" (McEachern 1992: 164). Farmers are responsible for *tending* or *nurturing* countrysides (McEachern 1992). As stewards, farmers are also seen as *landscape gardeners* (see Lowe *et al.* 1986; Sheail 1995) and *park-keepers* (Fitton 1981). Lowe *et al.* (1986: 99) links stewardship with "*gentlemen virtues*". Schumacher's "small is beautiful" principles are mentioned by Body (1984) to highlight stewardship: beauty and quality of the landscape, the welfare of farm animals, the health of the nation, and good husbandry.

As *nurturers*, a farmer's work is real and quantitatively different from other occupations (McEachern 1992). This provides intrinsic reasons why farmers should be supported: "*farmers and land managers need the support of society as a whole in looking after a beautiful and accessible countryside*" (CoCo 1995: 5). Further reasons why farmers should be supported are: the climate is uncontrollable, there are cyclical fluctuations in output and competition, research and development needs to be encouraged, and supplies and prices need to be stabilised (see Lowe *et al.* 1986: 312). However, Murdoch and Pratt (1993: 419) deny that there is "*nothing particularly distinctive about agriculture*", hence implying that it does not need support.

McEachern (1992: 170) expands on this idea of farmers needing support for their stewardship role, by invoking business metaphors: "*farmers' knowledge of the countryside and the morality encapsulated within stewardship authorised them as rural conservationists while the business nature of the farming venture necessitated their payment for this role*" (emphasis added). This is a good example of how metaphors are partial, and can co-exist, even in paradoxical ways. A second example of contradictory metaphors is provided by Walter (1995: 57) in his study of images of "successful farmers" in farm magazines: "... (both) a steward of the land and as a highly productive producer for a hungry world". Farmers-as-needing support is a theme that will be explored in later sections.

Conservation was seen as a *practical* expression of stewardship, and farmers were the people who enacted conservation: "it's got to be an individual on the ground who wants it to work" [i9]. Conservation was seen as "more at a farm-based level" [h2], and was seen as being practical, whereas countryside was seen as wider scale and perhaps as being more abstract [cf. h2]. Farmers in particular tended to talk of conservation rather than countryside *per se*. I now discuss some of the conservation metaphors brought forth, as these also act as windows onto countryside metaphors.

One metaphor that emerged out of Workshop 1 was conservation-as-a hobby: "... (it is a) pretty damning indictment I suppose, but conservation is why we're here tonight, because it is our hobby! ..." [e6]. Hence various conservation projects were: "wonderful projects, but all because we like to see those things" [e6]. This metaphor reveals that conservation is not mainstream, or integral, and that conservation projects are trivialised: "... oh we've got an abandoned pond all overgrown, we quite like to clear it out... I mean, that is a hobby really, isn't it..." [e2]. Conservation was also trivialised by reference to 'waste ground': "It is just a bit of waste ground, and doing something with it, and I got a lot of fun out of doing it actually" [e4]. Countryside-as-polarised also flows from this view of conservation, as farming practices are left unmodified. A FWAG adviser elaborated: "a lot of good things have been done in this name (of conservation), for example woodlands... but (it has) only half the benefit if (farmers) don't take into account things like spray drift" [h4].

¹ Would this statement have emerged if farmers had been paid to come to a workshop?

One aspect revealed by hobby metaphors is that a farmer's enthusiasms are important, and also his or her enjoyment and interests (see Russell and Ison 1993). Farmers were seen to be interested or enthusiastic about different things: "...lots of people are interested in machines, and people are interested in their computers, and they're interested in different sorts of things. Now if you took farmers as an average, they are far more aware of wildlife than the average population... but there are lots of them who take enormous pride in their machinery... we're all different..." [e7]. An implication was that there were farmers who were not interested in conservation or countrysides: "... it's not something that appeals to them..." [i9]; and "we've unfortunately got people who aren't interested in the countryside, they're interested in farming as a business" [e7]. This also has implications for conservation schemes that do not take into account a farmer's interests.

Other metaphors of conservation are implicit in the discussion of conservation-as-a hobby, particularly *projects* and *waste areas*. Table 6.2 outlines eight conservation metaphors that were brought forth during fieldwork, and what aspects each revealed and concealed. One link they all have to stewardship metaphors, is through the assumption that farmers enact conservation. Other metaphors of farming and countrysides are also embodied by the conservation metaphors, as shown by the last column of the table. One of the most prominent metaphors embodied by *conservation* is countrysides-as-polarised.

Farming as stewardship reveals aspects to do with farmers 'taking care of the land', and that it is farmers that enact conservation. Stewardship particularly conceals economic and policy constraints on farmers' actions; however, these aspects are revealed by the next cluster of farming-as-a business.

6.2.3 FARMING-AS-A BUSINESS

Business metaphors were often espoused especially during fieldwork. The metaphors reveal aspects such as the importance of farmers making a profit, and further that stewardship was contingent on these profits. The metaphors also reveal some of the constraints on farming, particularly time, labour and regulations. Business metaphors also reveal aspects of "company farming", and a view that farming should be subject to controls just as any business. Aspects concealed by this metaphor included farmer's enthusiasms and interests, as well as a *diversity* of business approaches.

Table 6.2 Metaphors of conservation brought forth during fieldwork

Metaphor (conservation-as-)	Reveals	Conceals	Embodied metaphors of farming and countrysides
a hobby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * interests and enthusiasms * costs * tack-on * production first 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * constraints * integration of farming and conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * countrysides-as-polarised; -as-enjoyed * farming-as-a business
waste areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * not mainstream * field corners conserved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * a narrow definition of use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * countrysides-as-polarised * farming-as-production
separate projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * not mainstream * tacked-on and piecemeal schemes * volunteers (BTCV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * integration of farming and conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * countrysides-as-polarised
integral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 'relationships' * modified farming practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * dominance of production metaphors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * countrysides-as-managed
costly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * business aspects * conservation benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * simple measures * incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * countrysides-as-polarised * farming-as-a business
respectable subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * awareness * public opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * farming-as-stewardship
PR exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * public opinion * media influence * conflicts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * non-integration * 'saleable' issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * countrysides-as-polarised; -as-managed (gardened)
competitive edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * business aspects * regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * interests * stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * farming-as-a business

Business was directly linked to production metaphors by one farmer: "it's a business with the aim of the business to produce food" [i7]. However, the intensity of the comments regarding businesses set this metaphor apart. These comments usually referred to 'the economics' and the need to make profits: "at the end of the day, (it) is cash..." [i6]. Farmers needed to "make a living" [i4], otherwise "... if it isn't a business, then it can only be a way of life for those who can afford it" [e7].

Those who could afford it were "the green-welly brigade with substantial off-farm income" [e10]. Whilst economics and profit were often highlighted as part of a farming business, more complex notions such as "returns on capital" were usually avoided in conversations. I was left with an impression that 'economics' was being used as a catch-all phrase that did not need any justification.

Business metaphors were used to indicate that farming (and hence countryside?) was only a concern of farmers: "... the playing area is for the players" [e7]. The context of this comment was in talking of farming-as-cricket: "...You know, to me it's rather like cricket, you were rather excited about cricket, we don't want the public running all over the square, you know, if the public can get excited and when someone can score 200 quickly, they can run onto the pitch, I don't mind a little bit of a display of interest is fair enough. But on the whole the playing area is for the players, and most of the land we have to farm to the best of our ability, and we have to do it profitably..." [e7]. This quote revealed that the players were considered to be the farmers, although it might be interesting to extend the cricket theme and ask 'who is the umpire?'. One possibility that I explore later, is that the umpire is the regulations or constraints on a business. This farmer stated strongly that he did not want to be told what to do. Limitations of a cricketing metaphor include a concealment of people's purposes, and indeed that countryside and farming can be thought of as a game (with well defined rules?).

One person claimed that *as* businesses, farming should be subject to controls and regulations as other businesses are [c1]. Body (1984: 27) claims that "*the destruction of the countryside can be stopped by applying planning restrictions on agriculture similar to those imposed on businessmen*". Farming is: "... no different from an industry producing whatever that has a by-product that is polluted and therefore has to be controlled...it's just that every industry has now become more environmentally aware, through legislation, and farming's just another one. I don't think we're any different..." [i14]. This provides a stark contrast with notions of stewardship, and supports King and Clifford's (1987) metaphor of farming-as-polluting.

Business metaphors also reveal a persistent argument that profitable farming is a "good thing" for the environment: "if you're productive and making a living, you're going to be in a better position to look after the countryside anyway, the two go hand-in-hand" [i7]. Short (1992) suggests that the 'what is good for the farmer is good

for the countryside' view may have changed, because of a restructured economy and also because of different social relations in villages. However, McEachern (1992: 160) illustrates this "prosperity thesis" with respect to conservation: "...(*since the war*) a strong strain in farmers' discourses about conservation policy continues to link prosperity and growth to ability to enact conservation measures...". A profit is needed, otherwise conservation would not be done: "I bring it back to prosperity, if you don't have a few pounds spare to do it, you don't do it" [i4]. Conservation thus depends on a prosperous agriculture (Lowe *et al.* 1986: 175).

Planting hedges was used to illustrate that conservation depended on profits: "But I can only plant hedges as long as I'm making profits. So number one is making profit, then when I've got that profit, my conscience tells me I should be planting hedges, not spraying in the hedges, and when it comes to choosing those chemicals, I should choose the friendly, the less harmful ones, and have this compromise according to costs..." [i9]. Hence *making* profits was seen as separated from *using* those profits (to do conservation), which indicated that business concerns took priority. The implications of this argument soon followed:

"I think at the moment we can afford to have a conscience, because we're making money. But if the pressure is on us, where we've got to survive, then everything, the minor things like hedges, the environment, what people think of us, won't matter..." [i9].

Farmers-as-needing support was introduced in the exploration of stewardship metaphors. Body (1984) points out that farming as a business entails linkages with other businesses, and a business does not occur in isolation. Hence farmers should be considered as part of a chain or network. As part of a chain, a farmer is no more important than other members of the chain. This calls into question the ideology of supporting *farmers* with public funds. Body (1984: 26) points to other members of the chain such as seed merchants, abattoirs: "*they also share in the ups and downs of harvests, the cycles and oddities of uncertain demand*" (some cited justification as to why farming is different and therefore needs support).

Keeping farms viable as businesses was seen to entail support because of the extra costs being imposed:

"if you want the countryside around here to have the same sort of hedges as in Australia, and the working conditions they have in Mexico, Brazil and Thailand... and the welfare standards of southern Spain and Greece; if you want our society to be like that, then you can afford to do all those things. But if you want to do without sow stalls, and (you want) pesticide acts, and welfare standards... (and) workers rights... somewhere, somebody has to pay for it, either you have got to make food costs more, or you can have food at world market (prices) and we've got to subsidise all these extra on-costs..." [i13].

Subsidies were seen as a "small cost, for the average taxpayer to support agriculture" [i9]. Some farmers expressed a preference for trading on world markets such as New Zealand farmers can, and be without all these added restrictions, although this would never be possible as there "never will be a level playing field" [i9].

Business metaphors reveals constraints on farming, particularly time, labour and regulations. This was in addition to intrinsic constraints, such as time-lags for production: "... today you are going that way, and tomorrow you are going that way, well farming is not like that, it is a long term process. You can't press a button on the production line and stop or start it" [d9]. Time was seen as the major constraint: "...It's again a problem of, they're self-employed, they're running their own farm, they're working all the hours of daylight..." [d2]. A shortage of time was linked to the declining workforce. A trend to contract out specific operations also exacerbated the shortage of labour, as when someone was employed, they would have been available for other jobs when not performing these operations. Maintenance was something pointed to that was now suffering [d9], but so were conservation-oriented activities [d1].

An implication of time being a constraint is that it had a high opportunity cost: "the problem is that if we start spending too much time on other businesses, the core business loses out" [i1]. Farmers spoke of how extra tasks, such as maintaining footpaths, detracted from their business: "I think a third of my time, is taken up dealing with things that earn me not one shilling" [i6]. This meant that farmers "haven't time to get together" [i7], which raises questions about the possibilities of engaging in research (see Chapter 10).

Some farmers linked business metaphors with 'company farming': "a lot of us are managing for institutions rather than for ourselves" [i14]. High overheads meant that farming was "... becoming more of a closed shop than before ... unless (it is a) company farm with capital..." [d9]. Some of these high overheads were policy induced, such as milk quotas. An effect of high overheads was that "a modest financial error, can mean failure..." [d6]. Company farming was differentiated from family farming: "I would be very loath to see too much extension of this company or factory farming, where the... paid manager who has to increase his results by 10% every year or he is out... the accountants call the tune, and the accountants don't ever get muck on their boots" [d9]. Another farmer expressed reservations that institutional farming could be environmentally friendly: "... (would shareholders) like to see less returns on their pension funds so that the farmer can look after the environment?" [i6]. He obviously thought they would not.

Business metaphors provoked a hot reaction in Workshop 2. At the time of the controversy surrounding live animal exports and veal crates, in 1995, participants stressed welfare issues [e9, e10]. Rather than assuming that business came first, and that conservation depended on profits, other considerations were considered to be more important. In contrast to 'whether you can afford to', one person instead demanded: "can you afford not to?" [e10]. Welfare and environmental issues were mostly concealed by business metaphors, even though some farmers related welfare to business by the higher sale prices of healthier animals [e.g., i13].

Business metaphors reveal that farming contributes to the rural economy and to a *working countryside*. In times when agriculture is declining, diversification was seen as an option that could keep businesses viable. This could include other crops such as 'bio-fuel' [e1], but also "small workshops" (light industry) [e3]. Diversification is concealed by the emphasis on farming. Different approaches to business also seemed to have been concealed. I discuss diversification further as a part of the cluster of metaphors of *rural communities*.

Business metaphors also conceal an observation that McEachern makes, that "*a lot of farmers disliked many business tasks, (such as) the paperwork, making forward financial projections, liaising with government departments*" (McEachern 1992: 167). One further aspect concealed was that businesses were in competition [e6]. Just as labour had decreased, so had the number of businesses. This farmer claimed that 'survival', in economic terms, had become very prominent in farmers' thinking, especially as the number of dairy farms

(for example) could drop by a quarter in the next five to ten years. Thus a farmer must pay attention to competitiveness [e6].

McEachern (1992: 167) claims that business metaphors are strategically used by farmers: "*Farmers would thus say 'farming is business' in order to justify particular policies or actions or to oppose conservation legislation*". All of my discussions during fieldwork at some point mentioned 'economics' or business, which is a measure of how reified this metaphor is. I have outlined how business metaphors reveal certain aspects of farming: the perceived need to be profitable, contributions to a 'working' countryside, and the influences on a business of time and labour. Welfare and farmers' interests are concealed by this metaphor. The 'strategic use of metaphors' suggests that farmers have some degree of autonomy, which I discuss in the next cluster of metaphors.

6.2.4 FARMERS-AS-AUTONOMOUS

Autonomy is strongly linked to farmers acting as individuals, and is especially relevant to diverse stakeholder contexts. The metaphors in this cluster were expressed both in the literature and during fieldwork, and included farmers-as-: *managers, decision makers, responsible, autonomous, and knowledgeable agents*. Farmers particularly used autonomy when talking of being 'in control' of their farming. The metaphor also reveals 'the voluntary principle', a distinction between 'conservative' and 'reformist' viewpoints, and *stewardship* as an expression of these metaphors. The metaphor conceals economic and policy constraints on decision making, and that research from within a ToT paradigm, in turn, often ignores farmers' autonomy and 'knowledge'.

Autonomy reveals that farmers want to feel in control of their farming: "we like to think that we make our own decisions; whether we do is another thing" [e6].

Another farmer stated this more strongly: "we want to be in charge of our own destiny" [g3]. One person thought that farmers "ought to feel responsibility" for the land, as they owned or managed it [e10].

The 'voluntary principle' is appropriate to this cluster of metaphors (Cox *et al.* 1990; McEachern 1992). The principle implies the opposite to 'imposed' measures, where farmers 'free' of controls will act responsibly: "... *farmers unencumbered by externally generated regulations and controls will be better able to farm in such a way that they balance conservation and agricultural production needs*" (McEachern 1992: 160). The voluntary principle is thus likened to 'responsible autonomy' (Cox *et al.* 1988; McEachern, 1992).

McEachern (1992) and Cox *et al.* (1988) outline how the voluntary principle, and hence stewardship, hinge on notions of 'private property rights'. This has been most strongly attacked by Shoard (1980; 1987) who strongly argues that land "should not" be subject to private property rights, and that others should have a say in how land is used. "Compensation" is the other side to responsible autonomy and private property rights (McEachern 1992:161), where farmers are entitled to claim compensation if their autonomy is infringed through various policies (Cox *et al.* 1988; 1990). Compensation is usually based on lost business opportunities and income foregone, and was seen as the backdrop to the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, where farmers could claim compensation for not infringing SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) or AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) requirements. This act, amended in 1985, was widely criticised on the grounds that:

- farmers then have a right to grant aid;
- they must be compensated for any hypothetical production losses; and
- compensation is not paid by MAFF, but out of the limited budgets of conservation agencies (see Lowe *et al.* 1986).

It should be noted that many later policies have taken on board the 'negativity' and problems associated with compensation, and have instead moved to 'positive' incentives for undertaking conservation measures.

Potter (1986) proposes a further distinction, relevant to autonomy metaphors, between a "conservative" and "reformist" viewpoint as to farmers' actions in the countryside. A conservative viewpoint sees the problem (whose problem and what problem?) as lying in the individual, and tries to change him or her. Education and persuasion are then appropriate means to change attitudes, values and indeed farming practices (see Ison 1993, for a discussion of changing attitudes). Potter (1986) suggests the conservative viewpoint is codified in the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, and also expressed in the workings of FWAG. A reformist viewpoint, in contrast, sees the problem as lying in the policy framework and tries to change that. Here the farmer is just making rational decisions induced by policy: "we can only play the system to the best of our ability" [16]. This is akin to considering farmers-as-implementors of policy, which I consider in the next cluster.

McEachern (1992) claimed that politically, farmers willingness to participate in conservation schemes based on voluntarism has helped maintain farming industry controls. Bishop and Phillips (1992: 317) add that:

"implicit in this voluntary approach was an assumption that there was no inherent conflict between agriculture and conservation and that such difficulties as did arise could be resolved by goodwill and common sense".

Another metaphor in the autonomy cluster is farmers-as-knowledgeable agents. This reveals seeing a farmer as innovative and a *"skilful problem solver and user of technology"* (Walter 1995). Knowledgeable agents implies that it is desirable to involve farmers in matters concerning farming and countrysides *beyond* reasons of autonomy, as they might have more knowledge about their farm than others. The metaphor also reveals farmers-as-active researchers, and calls into question those research programmes that treat farmers as passive recipients of technology (cf. Chapters 1 and 3). *Knowledgeable agents* reveals that some farmers consider there already is "loads of information there" [i4], but "it's given as reams of blurb which you haven't got time to read" [i14]. The metaphor conceals the constraints farmers experience, especially those of time and running a business.

6.2.5 FARMERS-AS-IMPLEMENTORS OF POLICY

Implementors of policy is consistent with the "reformers" viewpoint, as outlined by Potter (1986), and was especially prevalent during fieldwork. The metaphor embodies the metaphor of countrysides-as-managed. Under the metaphor, farmers do what they are told and are led by policies rather than being *autonomous and in control*. The metaphor conceals enthusiasms and farmers' decisions, and also aspects of lobbying. Policy was seen both negatively, as red tape, and positively as "part of a system" in which farmers had to play by the rules.

The first aspect revealed by this metaphor was that farmers were "doing what they were told" [e.g. i1]. Farmers had "always been led" by policies [e6]. I discussed the dominance of the CAP previously, but politicians were seen to "actually affect our businesses quite significantly, and we have no control over them..." [i7]. Hence, the metaphor reveals a perception of a 'lack of control' by farmers. This lack of control had two implications. The first was that there was a

diminishment of responsibility, for example with chemical use: "... farmers have been told to use different chemicals (by MAFF and ADAS), so it (is not) their fault if it damages the environment" [e2]. It was also "not up to farmers to change the public's mind... farmers are just doing what they are told to do..." [i11]. The second implication was that farmers perceived a business loss if they did not conform to those rules: "I'm going to drill as tight to the hedge as I can get it... otherwise we are going to lose our payment... because we are paid on the area sown... (and) not paid to include a sterile strip" [i1]. The latter half of the quote refers to both agricultural support payments (discussed later) and to a specific conservation measure (sterile strips) that were at one time promoted particularly by the Game Conservancy.

Body (1984) claims that as implementors of policy, farmers were a kind of public servant, paid out of the public purse. A public servant was not a businessman, and Body (1984: 26) continues that it would be better for a farmer to be either a businessman, or a kind of public servant, but not both, as otherwise there would be too many financial and regulatory pressures put on the farmer.

The metaphor revealed an overarching policy framework that some viewed as negative: "we've got more and more red tape within our industry" [i7]. Increasing red-tape was a constraint on business: "the trouble today with the CAP and everything else is that you almost need an accountant... to keep abreast of all the form filling... there is far too much" [d9]. One farmer worried about the social consequences of this framework, that farmers would not "worry about the market... (and it was) creating a whole sub-culture and mindset, that we just sit here and you just give us money" [h4]. A statement by another farmer confirmed those worries: "I'm very, very happy to fill that form in... two days work, I get paid a lot of money for filling that form in..." [i1].

However, the policy framework was also seen as enabling people to "know exactly what is going on. But it's a massive bureaucratic scheme to collect it all" [i1]. "And now they've got complete management of UK farming, in fact European farming... can tweak prices and lower and raise the area of set-aside... so we're following the politicians" [i4]. By tweaking prices, farmers could be encouraged to grow other crops than winter cereals [i9, i4]. The policy framework reifies countryside-as-managed metaphors, though in this case it is not the farmers who are the managers.

A policy framework revealed that farmers were part of a system. Further that: "I don't mind being part of that system either. If I want to be a farmer I have got to play by the rules that are already in existence today... I can argue and try to reform them to my best advantage... but I play by the rules that are there whether I like them or not" [e6]. Trying to reform rules was labelled as "the need to lobby" [i4], but this was contrasted with an image of a farmer as an "opportunist", someone who could "take what the politicians say, and work around it" [i9]. Playing by the rules was seen as desirable in the long run: "at the time, (we are) upset if forced to do something, but in the long run it's the right thing to do [giving an example of being forced to put roll-bars on tractors]" [i9]. Being part of a system was not seen as negative as long as control over decisions could be maintained [e6]. It was seen as negative with respect to things like milk quotas, where emphasis moved to purely financial interests: "...nearly half of the quota (is held) by people NOT milking"; and with quotas it was "... not what is good for farming, but what is good for your bank balance" [d9]

Under the "reformist" position outlined by Potter (1986), this metaphor revealed that the way to achieve countryside change was to reform the policy framework. One way of doing this is to form a Ministry of Rural Affairs by merging DoE and MAFF (e.g., Lowe *et al.* 1986), a call revived by the CLA during 1995. A second is to reform the CAP.

Many of the organisations outlined in Chapter 5 are involved in lobbying for reform to the CAP. Reform was seen as essential: "increasingly what has been a production policy and an economic policy (Article 43 of the Treaty of Rome) has been turned into a social policy... that's where it all went wrong" [a2]. Reform was also seen as a way of incorporating environmental objectives into agricultural policy, rather than just "tacking them on" [a1].

The policies themselves are also revealed by this metaphor. A distinction can be drawn between policies that were voluntary and relied on positive incentives such as grants, and those that were negative and entailed cross-compliance. Policies that were voluntary reinforced farmers' autonomy. Cross-compliance is a principle where *"...support for agricultural production should be conditional upon compliance with certain stipulated forms of environmentally sensitive farming practices. Farmers deciding not to farm in an environmentally friendly manner would not receive any price support"* (Bishop and Phillips 1992: 325). Cross-compliance was interpreted as recognising: "the best way to persuade farmers is financial..." [i9]. MAFF are reported to view cross compliance as becoming a normal feature of agricultural support (Bishop and

Phillips 1993: 326). One farmer used a metaphor of conservation-as-a competitive edge (Table 6.2) to show the possible effects of future requirements: building waste-management facilities now to a higher than required standard, which would give higher profits in the future when others had to upgrade their facilities [e6].

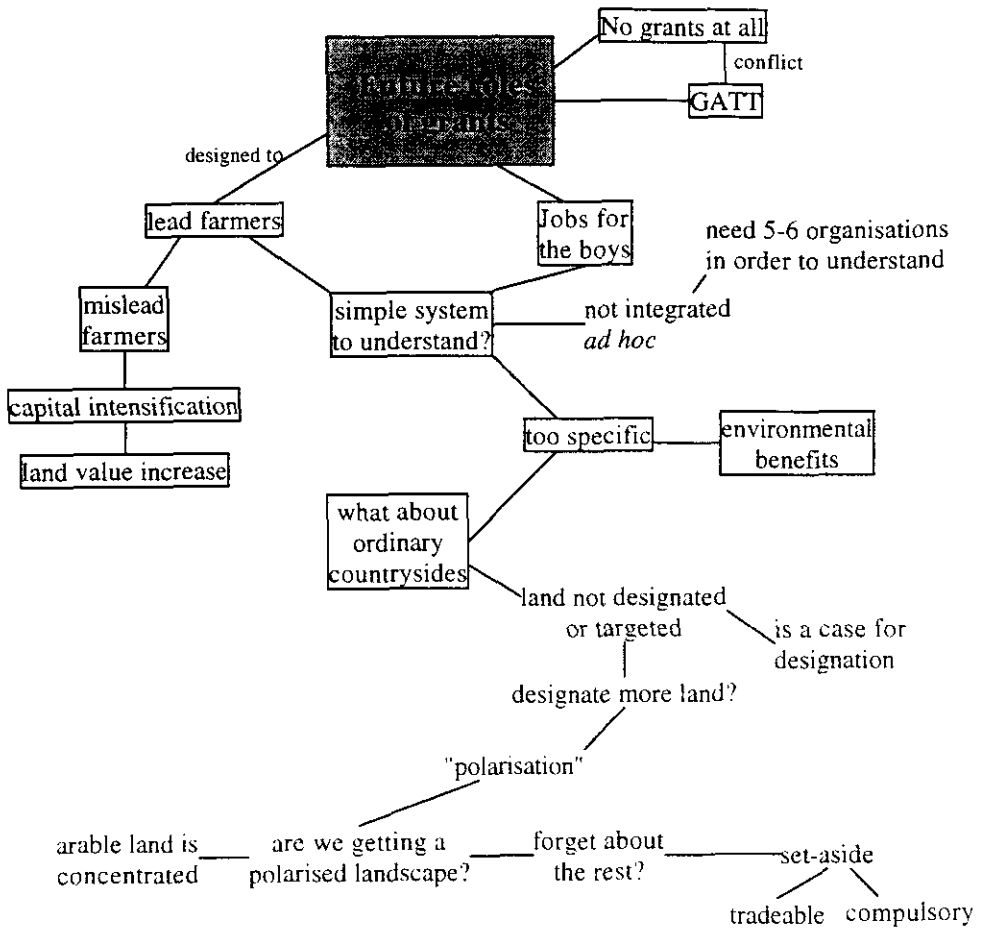
Voluntary participation in conservation schemes has been looked at by many authors (Potter and Gasson 1988; Potter 1990; Brotherton 1991; Webster and Felton 1993; and Potter and Lobley 1994 amongst others). Potter and Lobley (1994: 270-1), for example, propose that farmers act as conservationists by one of three mechanisms: inclination; default; or association.

Conservationist by inclination refers to farmers who want to consider conservation as part of their farming and who might be interested in conservation schemes. Conservationist by default refers to the case when the farmer lacks the means to intensify production, which draws a sharp distinction between conservation and farming-as-production. Conservationist by association suggests that farmers were in an area that was 'rich in environmental assets'. Potter and Lobley consider these three mechanisms when they make the case that small farms are more environmentally beneficial. Morris and Potter (1995) couch voluntary participation in terms of "adoption", and distinguished between passive and active adopters of Agri-environmental policies. This conceals autonomy, interests and "response-ability" of farmers, which was some of the motivation for this thesis. It also reinforces a separation between policy making and implementation.

During fieldwork, voluntary schemes were usually called 'grants'. Grants were seen as a trigger, and that: "people wouldn't do anything without grants - grants are a trigger" [d1]. Grants could only be a trigger, because they did not "cover full costs" [e2]. The image of a 'trigger' indicates the prescriptive aims of policies, and the implication that farmers would not do something unless paid reinforces business metaphors. Other farmers thought that grants were not "worth the hassle"; and that they only paid "for something I was doing anyway" [i13]. Considering grants as windows led to two conflicting metaphors: countrysides-as-polarised and "designated" [e6]; and countrysides-as-standardised [d2]. In the latter metaphor, conservation work was not seen to take into account local variation of features (for example, Cornish hedges being different from parish to parish). A perceived danger with grants was that because of a need to

measure things, that: "we should have about five percent of the farmed area... be natural habitats. Well that is really nonsense. Because in some cases it might be 50 percent of the farm, in others it might be 2.5 percent ... it is not the quantity, it's the context and the quality" [a1].

The "future role/s of grants" was explored by diagramming, during a SSI with one farmer, and is presented in Figure 6.2. A verbal explanation of this figure could be "Grants are designed to lead farmers. This can mislead farmers as it gives rise to capital intensification and land value increases (i.e. giving the wrong signals). Cynically, grants could be considered as jobs for the boys, as someone has to administer the grants, and this often takes 5-6 organisations. There is a plea for a simple system that is integrated. There are environmental benefits from grants, but the biggest problem is that they are too specific: what about ordinary, undesignated countrysides? This raises the question should more countryside thus be designated and fall under grant systems? This leads to a concern that we are getting polarised landscapes. There is a question, should there be any grants at all" [paraphrased from diagram and interview- e6].



Key:
 boxed statements: farmer's written 'post-it' notes
 other statements: verbal comments during interview

Figure 6.2 "The future roles of grants"- a farmer's diagram, jointly constructed and modified during an interview

In Appendix 1, I explore three policies: Set-aside; Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). The first relies on cross-compliance, whereas the other two are voluntary. Table 6.3 gives an overview of what aspects they reveal and conceal, and what metaphors of farming and countrysides they embody. Considering aspects revealed and concealed of these policies is a sleight of hand, in that it then implies that these policies (or understandings of them) can be considered as being metaphorical in themselves.

Table 6.3 Three policies as windows to farming and countrysides metaphors

Policy	Reveals	Conceals	Farming metaphors embodied	Countrysides metaphors embodied
Set-aside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *cross-compliance * monitoring *subsidies *a "slack" in the system * benefits go to big farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * tensions between production, social, or environmental aspects to policy? *distractions from 'important issues' * uncertainty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * production * business * implementors of policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * polarised * managed
Countryside Stewardship (CS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *stewardship *certain types of habitat * positive incentives * management agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * limited scope of the scheme * production aspects * partial targeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * stewardship * autonomous * traditional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * managed * experienced * wildlife habitats
Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * designations * traditional practices * changes in MAFF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * not significant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * stewardship * autonomous * traditional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * managed * wildlife habitats

6.2.6 FARMERS-AS-VICTIMS

Victim metaphors directly followed from farmers-as-implementors of policy, in that farmers felt powerless and lacking autonomy. Three sources revealed for this helplessness were:

- unfairness in policies;
- costs and circumstances; and
- "the public".

Some policies were seen as inappropriate, changed often without warning, and were unequally enforced between different EU member countries (leading to economic disadvantages). Costs and circumstances referred to business considerations, but also to aspects such as a decreasing labour force. Victims of "the public" continues a theme expressed in countrysides-as-not understood, and reveals aspects of farming being *visible*, *criticised*, and *under attack*. It also reveals "media" influences in countrysides issues but also factors like rural crime. The consequences of being a victim were expressed as isolation, being a minority and also suicide. Victim metaphors conceal aspects of autonomy.

Farmers-as-victims is explicit in Body's (1984) commentary on farming. Here farmers were victims of inappropriate policy, and also a "troika" of MAFF, leaders of the NFU and the agri-chemical industry, who were all pushing for increased production. Body claimed that farmers were not to blame for changes in agriculture, and hence to countrysides, or for the high costs of agricultural policies (*ibid.*, p10).

One farmer sympathised with what MAFF were trying to do, and said that at the time it was appropriate policy as the goal was to increase food production [i9]. Another thought that it was inevitable that policy would be inappropriate as "...something that is dependent on the weather [such as farming], you cannot match supply and demand equal..." [i6]. Abrupt changes to policies also gave an impression of farmers being victims, such as changing set-aside rules in 1994 *after* the crop had been sown. Abrupt changes were confounded by not being informed of changes: "no-one actually told us about the changes (to area payments)..." [i1]. Changes in policy were seen as difficult to cope with in a long-term business [e.g., h1].

Being victims of policy also revealed a concern by many farmers that supposedly "common" policy was not equally enforced across EU member

states. Farmers in Britain (UK) were "far too law abiding", and "other countries in Europe (are) laughing because (they) don't have the extra costs" [i5]. This leads to unfair competition, and hence economic disadvantages. There were a lot of anti-EU sentiments expressed by farmers in general, and concern for "false markets" being created, and being run by "unelected bureaucrats" [i5].

The second way that farmers were victims, was through costs [i13] and circumstances [i7]. These comments related especially to the decline in labour: "... we've become a victim as well, probably through our own efficiency in production. We haven't got the people around to help us do jobs" [i7]. Farm workers also were seen to work longer hours, which detracted from their role as members of a rural community. Isolation and fewer farm workers are cited as some of the main contributors to a high suicide rate amongst farmers (Mullin 1996). Fewer farm workers also revealed that farms were dangerous, especially those farms where there was only one person [i6]. It could be very serious if something happened while someone was working on their own [i6]. One farmer outlined new European (health and safety) legislation where the status of British farming changed to be "under the constraints of any dangerous industry... which puts us in line with the construction industry" [i5]. Farming-as-dangerous is an image that seems foreign to the "rural idyll" and romantic images that I discuss in the next cluster.

Farmers also felt they were victims of 'the public'. Some of this arose because farming was visible: "everybody sees what we do... we can't put an umbrella over it and shut the door..." [i6]. One way to decrease the visibility was to have "...a roadside hedge... (then) as people drove along, they wouldn't see that he [the farmer] is behind there spraying, so it wouldn't upset them..." [i9]. One FWAG adviser thought that: "there must be few other businesses out there who would be so heavily criticised for being so good at what they did" [h5]. Farming was "suffering now from an awful lot of experts coming out of the woodwork" [i4 or i13]. Criticism, and the increasing threat of litigation acted to make farmers more defensive [i13]. 'The media' were also highlighted as contributing to farmers being a victim, mainly because of their "sensationalism" [i14], and because "environmental and animal welfare issues (are) rammed down our throats" [i1]. 'The media' tended also to gloss over the "good points", indeed "nobody ever pats us on the back" [i7].

However, criticism was not all bad:

"I just feel that too many farmers have got their backs up, that the public are criticising them, and they're just turning and saying well the public have no right to criticise us because we're good people. Whereas I think we should listen to them, they're not always right, and you'll always get people that are too far to the extreme, but the old generation don't listen. Some of the younger ones don't listen. You've got to just be prepared to change things, listen to all sides" [i9].

Some farmers had been victims of rural crime, particularly theft. One farmer thought that it was "a bit sad in today's world that you've got to keep things locked" [i4]. Slates had been stolen from the roof of a barn, which would probably mean that it would be left to fall down [i9]. One farmer was concerned that people could walk on her farm: "... you've got to have some control over where people walk. Partly because of security, because of the tremendous problems of rural crime" [i5]. Rural crime is an issue glossed over in campaigns such as "rights to roam", as are legal implications and litigations arising from accidents on farms.

Victim metaphors conceal autonomy, which is questioned by three contrasting images also used to describe farmers. The first image is farmers as *thieves*, which reveals that far from being victims, farmers are "*willing destroyers of the countryside*" (Shoard 1980; 1987). Shoard argues that farmers know about the destruction that intensive agriculture causes, but are protected from sensible planning controls. She also outlines how others have a right to say how the countryside is used, and attacks notions of private property rights. The second image is often used by the farming press (such as *The Farmer's Weekly*): most farmers are OK and it is only a few *mavericks* that ever cause any damage. The third image is referred to as "*the blight of tidiness*" (Rackham 1987; Mabey 1993), that unless land is neat, tidy, without weeds and bracken, and well drained, then it is not "*clean and healthy*" and can instead be viewed as neglected (McEachern, 1992: 165). With this argument, land is made beautiful through exploitation and use, and this exploitation counters any suggestions of farmers being victims.

6.2.7 FARMING-AS-TRADITIONAL

This cluster of metaphors, which includes farming-as-a way of life and farming-as-romantic, reveals perceptions of farming as *conservative*, *dominated by an older generation*, and *hard to enter*. The cluster conceals,

quite significantly, gender issues and that farming metaphors are very male-oriented. It also conceals business and policy contexts, changes in practices, and also alternative practices such as 'organic' agriculture.

Farming-as-traditional was especially apparent during fieldwork: "you always get some that just do exactly as father did..."; "farming has got this old-fashioned image"; and "the other problem that the industry suffers from, is the age of it. There aren't enough youngsters..." [i9]. One farmer contrasted doing the same things as his father did: "at the moment...the traditional way of farming is with chemicals, whereas 50 years ago it would have been amazing to do that" [h4]. *Tradition* metaphors concealed changes in farm practices, and also whether the old practices are desirable anyway: " ... an integral part of industrial Yorkshire is chimneys with smoke coming out; (but) does that mean it's an accepted thing?" [h1].

Farming was seen as dominated by the older generation, and constrained by family structures: "... (there is a) family structure which affects all farms. There are very few farms where you're just the farmer who does what he wants..." [i9], though this did not seem to take into account company farms. Sometimes: "father stops you taking risks when you are keen, but they do hold you back a hell of a lot..." [i9]. Older farmers found it hard to retire: "...their business has become your life and your hobby" [i6], the switch from "their" to "your" indicating that he was including himself in that category. One aspect concealed by age considerations though, was the wisdom of older farmers: "... I have great respect for the generation that went before. They put ditches in certain places, and perhaps they were cleverer in the end than we are... they didn't have a JCB (machine), but they got things in the right place" [i4]. This wisdom extended through generations: "... (if) people can be more long term in their thinking, then maybe we can start to agree with some of the landowners who have been holding the land for generations" [h1].

Farming-as-traditional reveals a male-orientation, and hence conceals gender issues: "*In many ways, the culture of farmwork as it relates to environmental concerns is male gendered*" (McEachern 1992: 163). Brandth (1995: 123) claims that "*the complexity and diversity of women's activities on farms have been made visible...*", and cites some (mainly Norwegian) research to support this claim. However, she continues that "*the occupational title "farmer" usually implies a man as most women in farming consider themselves as farmers' wives or housewives*" (*ibid.*, p123). This still seems a very patriarchal distinction, and Walter (1995: 66) points to a presentation of "*women farm operators as anomalies*". Walter found that farming magazines tended to

separate family life from business considerations, by having its "*back-of-the-book family section*" (*ibid.*, p66). An examination of *Farmers Weekly*, one of the highest circulation farming magazines in the UK, reveals that "women's issues" too, suffer from this back-of-the-book relegation².

Farming as male-oriented provided motivation for this research to concentrate on farming families. This raised some eye-brows amongst some of the male farmers, who also mainly referred to a 'man' when they used the term 'farmer'. Working with farming families, is distinguished from "gender studies", because the invitation was not to women alone. Some FWAG advisers explicitly tried to work with both husband and wife, even if only for pragmatic reasons of increasing chances that advice is acted upon. One adviser stated that it was often a wife who had interest in seeing birds, that led to a change in farming practices [d2]. At the minimum, male-orientation conceals different metaphors of countrysides, and implies a different capacity to explore those metaphors (cf. Feldman and Welsh 1995).

Two related metaphors of farming-as-traditional were farming-as-a way of life and farming-as-romantic. The first was very common: "it's a way of life to us, we take so much for granted" [i7]. Walter (1995: 57) suggests that "*the way-of-life story relies on images of family, community, hard work, (simplicity), and closeness to the land*", and he contrasts this story with 'farming as a business' which "*emphasises the (farmer's productivity, technological sophistication, management savvy and independence*". One farmer bridged these two metaphors: "...farming is a way to live your life ... not necessarily a way of life, because I don't think that's acceptable in modern day perception, because I like to emphasise the business side of farming..." [e6].

The second related metaphor, *romantic*, embodied the metaphor of countrysides-as-experienced: "one of the delights... is seeing a plough - albeit on the back of a fast-tracked tractor - ploughing with sea gulls behind it" [h2]. For farmers, this romance revealed aspects of jealousy and not understanding: "I think there's an element of jealousy... people have this sort of romantic idea of wanting to be (farmers). Where if they came out in the middle of winter, then perhaps they would have a different viewpoint..." [i6]. This romance contradicts the *victim* image presented earlier. Links can also be drawn between romance and the "rural

² see for example, the tribute to "Women Achievers" in 'Farmlife', p3 (*Farmers Weekly*, 1 March, 1996).

idyll" myth, which: "masks the issues that are affecting local people" and means that "most of our time is spent trying to dispel that myth" [j7, ACRE]. Issues affecting local people leads into the next cluster of metaphors, farmers as part of a rural community.

6.2.8 FARMERS-AS-PART OF A RURAL COMMUNITY

Farmers-as-part of a rural community reveals social aspects and community issues not apparent in other metaphors. The metaphor reveals policies for countryside change that are not just for farmers, but rather for rural communities. The metaphor conceals the low number of farmers, and that much of the "business" does not involve local communities. It also conceals a lack of communication between farmers, let alone between farmers and other countryside dwellers.

Other farming metaphors brought forth exclude issues relating to rural communities: "as soon as you put something under farming, for anybody who isn't, anybody who lives in the countryside and isn't in farming, it seems that they're excluded simply by not being in farming... it makes a particular slant that inevitably ignores all other things..." [j5, NCVO]. Issues excluded include: health and transport [j5], and "the invisible" rural poverty (Short 1992: 2). These issues were claimed to also concern farmers [j7, ACRE], which leads to the metaphor of farmers-as-members of a rural community: "the farmers according to us are just members of the rural community" [j7, ACRE].

Sheail (1995: 83) continues that a major concern "*... was not how far individual farmers might remain 'guardians of amenity', but rather how the industry as a whole could continue to be a major employer of labour*". The decline in labour was highlighted previously, but this metaphor revealed the effects this was having on rural villages. Indeed, one person claimed that the "answer to conservation... is to bring in industry, and raise employment... not just diversification, as often the farmer doesn't have (those) skills" [j9, FWN].

A community, or network, would tend to suggest that people were in close proximity to each other. However, a lack of communication between farmers was concealed by this metaphor: "(we) don't communicate with our own neighbours, let alone with everybody else" [i7]. Some of this was because farming was self-sufficient: "because we're self-sufficient (as businesses) we think we can live in isolation" [i13].

One workshop participant concluded that: "... [farmers] are part of their local society, but they're really not at all" [h3]. This separation arose because:

- farmers used outside contractors;
- the controls on farming came from outside the area;
- markets were not in local areas; and
- incomers were resented [h*].

Previous metaphors have highlighted policies that were aimed at farmers, whereas this metaphor includes those relevant to rural communities. In the 1980's and 1990's, the Countryside Commission initiated an experimental programme called in retrospect 'countryside community action' (BDOR 1991). This programme was 17 *ad hoc* projects, undertaken with partners, in order to engage with local people. BDOR (1991: 6) identify that "*the notion of groups of people coming together to do something for themselves in relation to their local environment is nothing new*". However, the authors propose that coming together may have died out because ownership of private land is more dominant and people may believe they are incapable of taking their own action (due to planning). An alternative explanation, which I propose, is because of the dominance of other (farming) metaphors.

One of the community projects, a 'Planning for real' exercise with villagers in the Brecon Beacons National Park, is relevant to *rural community* metaphors. McGhie (1994) describes how this exercise involved local people in constructing tangible models of their village. Networks and communication can be strengthened by involvement in a project such as this; other metaphors have implied involvement is minimal. "Rural community development" literature, such as Wright (1992), and some of the 'participatory' and 'rural development' literature (cf. Chapter 3), also emphasise the *involvement* aspect of farmers (and others), when they are *part of a rural community*. This can also avoid the negative image of farming (and farmers) being in some sort of "ghetto" [g7], which was apparent under a metaphor of countryside-as-polarised.

6.3 Drawing the images together: appropriate, disabling and alternative metaphors

Of the eight farming clusters, I judged three clusters to be appropriate:

- farming-as-stewardship;
- farmers-as-autonomous; and
- farmers-as-part of a rural community.

Farming-as-stewardship is appropriate because it opens up *conservation* which was perceived by people to be more practical than countrysides *per se*. The metaphor of conservation-as-a hobby is very powerful, and it reveals farmers' interests and enthusiasms which I think have been largely ignored in both agricultural research and the literature on UK countrysides. Farmers-as-autonomous is judged to be an appropriate cluster mainly because it implies working *with* people. Discussions can then focus on how different peoples' understandings can be appreciated (as well as the farmers' own understandings), in the way that I have set out in previous chapters. Farmers-as-part of a rural community is appropriate because it emphasises farmers as part of a social context, as well as the importance of networks. The metaphor also allows community issues to be incorporated, which appear neglected when other metaphors are considered. The metaphor also suggests a further possibility that I could have explicitly included in the analysis of countrysides metaphors, that of countrysides-as-communities.

I judged three clusters of metaphors to be disabling and destructive:

- farmers-as-implementors of policy;
- farmers-as-victims; and
- farming-as-traditional.

Farmers-as-implementors of policy has the advantages of focusing attention on policies and the metaphors that the policies embody. However, the metaphor is disabling because it focuses on 'doing things *to*, or *on*, people' and not involving people in bringing-about future countrysides. Farmers-as-victims again gets into a 'blame' culture which is not very helpful for bringing forth future countrysides. Farmers-as-traditional is disabling because aspects of gender and age are concealed.

Two clusters of metaphors fell outside of these judgements: farming-as-production and farming-as-business. I almost judged *production* as being disabling because it is pervasive and exclusive of other metaphors, but the possibility of 'alternative commodities' is not disabling per se. *Business* metaphors focus on a 'working' part of countrysides, which is also not disabling. Hence I will leave these metaphors *as-if* unjudged.

The one metaphor that I suggest as being an alternative metaphor is farmers-as-networks of conversation. The metaphor reveals conditions for conversation and relationships, as I explained in Chapter 5, when I presented the same metaphor as being appropriate for countrysides. The metaphor is also strongly linked to rural community metaphors.

The metaphors and the judgements are summarised in Table 6.4. My attention then moves to the next chapter that again looks at an institution and the understanding gained by the window of FWAG.

Table 6.4 Metaphor clusters in Chapter 6 that were brought forth, explored and judged to gain an understanding of future countrysides

Metaphor cluster	Key points revealed	Judgement (appropriate, disabling or alternative)
Farming-as-production	* commodities and alternatives	- (possibly disabling)
stewardship	* conservation metaphors * enthusiasm	appropriate
a business	* farming a working part of countrysides	-
autonomous	* knowledgeable agents * respect	appropriate
implementors of policy	* policy types * farmers not in control	disabling
victims	* victims	disabling
traditional	* gender * age	disabling
part of rural communities	* local people's action	appropriate
networks of conversation	* fostering conversation * relationships	(implicitly appropriate)

6.4 Reflections on Chapter 6

Compared with the previous chapter, I found that I did not have to discuss the concealed aspects of most of these metaphors, because the concealed aspects were discussed under other metaphors. That is, I relied on juxtaposing metaphors much more than in previous chapters. One possible explanation is that I brought forth metaphors that were oppositional to other metaphors. I do not mean that the metaphors were opposites, however, *stewardship* can be contrasted with *production*, and *autonomous* contrasted with *implementors of policy*. I am not sure of whether there are any implications for the methods I have chosen: indeed it seems to confirm that they are effective.

One discussion that I have almost totally ignored regards tenant farmers and owner farmers. Two of the farming families in workshop 5 were tenant farmers. Some mention was made of aspects such as high tenancy prices, and how difficult it was for young people wanting to start farming because they did not have the capital to do so. I mention it here as an issue that is worthy of further thought and, for the time being, I recognise that I have unwittingly placed rented farms outside the scope of the thesis.

One other reflection is that I have included more of a historical discussion in this chapter. This has added to the length, but in turn I think it has pointed out the lack of consideration of historical perspectives in the last chapter.

I propose that this chapter on farming has relevance to agricultural research in general, especially to make explicit some metaphors which are probably considered 'fact', and to invite consideration of some alternative metaphors that can make up *images of farming*.

Chapter 7 Images of FWAG: understanding the research context III

This is the third chapter that outlines how metaphors gave an understanding of the research context. FWAG work with farmers and others concerned with future countrysides, and I describe their ways of working in this chapter. FWAG is another 'window' that I used to understand future countrysides. Exploring metaphors of FWAG is a way of making this window transparent as well as valuing the people that I was working with.

A focus on an organisation, such as FWAG, contrasts with looking at diverse stakeholder contexts as in the previous chapters. Concentrating on 'ways of working' is different from how metaphors have traditionally been used in organisational studies, which usually concentrate on the structure of the organisation, and commercial organisations at that. FWAG can be considered a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) or charity. Their mission to unite farming and conservation means that FWAG occupies an interesting position with respect to countrysides, and one that appears very relevant to working *with* people. FWAG's ways of working embody certain farming and countrysides metaphors, such as farmers-as-autonomous and countrysides-as-not understood. Presenting images of FWAG also illuminates traditions in which an organisation is embedded, such as a narrow focus on Transfer of Technology assumptions.

I have structured this chapter in a similar way to the previous chapters. I have included one further section which describes the 'content' of FWAG's advice, and moves during the research period (1994-1996) to develop an advisory package called 'Landwise'.

This chapter can inform further studies with an organisational focus and/or an agricultural or countrysides focus. With respect to FWAG itself, these metaphors can contribute to an exploration of possible future roles and structures. One aspect concealed by looking at metaphors of FWAG, is that the perspectives and ways of working of individuals *within the organisation* are very diverse. I did not experience the county FWAG groups as tightly-knit groups, rather as strong, and diverse, personalities. Some of this diversity is highlighted within the clusters of metaphors that follow.

7.1 An overview of images brought-forth, and links with farming and countrysides metaphors

Three main clusters of metaphors emerged from spending time with FWAG: *advising*, *uniting*, and *educating and encouraging*. I explore these clusters in terms of what aspects are revealed and concealed. Some of these aspects appear consistent with a transfer-of-technology (ToT) approach, where FWAG advisers act to *change* farmers' understandings. Other aspects appear consistent with an approach that tries to create space for change. A fourth cluster of metaphors, FWAG-as-Landwise is discussed as a narrative showing the content of FWAG's advice, criticisms of FWAG and organisational tensions, and the development of the advisory package called 'Landwise'. These four clusters are summarised in Table 7.1. All of these metaphors have vastly different implications for how FWAG is structured and how FWAG can contribute to future countrysides.

Table 7.1 An overview of FWAG's ways of working

Metaphors of FWAG's ways of working (FWAG-as-...)	Reveals	Conceals	Related Metaphors FWAG-as-...
advising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * a message to deliver * ToT assumptions * selling a service * farmers-as-clients * attributes of advisers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * members and volunteers in FWAG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * guiding, * consulting * specialist * professional
uniting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * an integration of farming and conservation * activities of volunteers and partner organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * an appreciation of diversity of understandings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * a niche', * a partnership
encouraging and educating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * confidence of farmers * awareness of conservation issues * activities such as farm walks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * a directional "we educate them" approach * selling a service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * a practical organisation
'Landwise'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * packaged product * consistency * articulating farmer's visions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * ToT assumptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * selling a package, * meeting the environmental challenge

FWAG's ways of working embody certain metaphors of farming and countrysides. Farmers-as-autonomous and countrysides-as-not understood are two immediate examples of the metaphors revealed by FWAG's ways of working. The metaphor of FWAG-as-advising only makes sense if farmers are assumed to be fairly autonomous and able to make decisions. If farmers are not making decisions, then what is the point of building an organisation to advise and guide them? Advising also assumes that farmers are in business, and that farmers can be stewards. One of FWAG's advertising slogans, *Conservation means business*, supports the use of both of these metaphors. Advising does not assume that farming is traditional, or that farmers are part of a rural community. Clearly, *advising* metaphors embody certain metaphors of farming, and not others. Similarly, advising reveals certain metaphors of countrysides, such as countrysides-as-managed, polarised, not understood and wildlife habitats.

The process of linking metaphors of FWAG with metaphors of farming and countrysides leads to a matrix, and the relationships between metaphors are marked from my perspective (Table 7.2). The question marks indicate that relationships appear possible but they were not supported by fieldwork data. I have included an extra column, my alternative metaphor of FWAG-as-facilitating networks.

From this matrix it is possible to conclude that similar farming and countrysides metaphors seemed to be invoked by the three main clusters of FWAG metaphors. One difference is that only the FWAG-as-advising metaphor appears to embody farming-as-implementing policy. Another difference is that the alternative metaphor that I propose, FWAG-as-facilitating networks, embodies farmers-as-part of rural communities which the other metaphors do not. Contrasting the similarities and differences between embodied metaphors can act as an extra site for exploring the metaphors of FWAG, although I do not pursue it here.

7.2 Metaphors of FWAG's ways of working

In this section I discuss the three main clusters of metaphors brought-forth during the research:

- FWAG-as-advising;
- FWAG-as-uniting; and
- FWAG-as-encouraging and educating.

Table 7.2 A matrix showing this author's attributed links between metaphors of FWAG and metaphors of farming and countrysides

	Metaphors of FWAG's ways of working				
	<i>FWAG-as-</i>				
Metaphors of farming and countrysides	advising	uniting	encouraging and educating	facilitating networks	FWAG-as-Landwise
<i>Countrysides -as-</i>					
a tapestry	-	?	-	?	-
meanings	-	-	?	R	-
changing	-	?	?	?	-
managed	R	R	?	R	R
polarised	R	R	?	R	R
not understood	R	R	R	R	R
wildlife habitats	R	R	R	R	R
<i>Farming or farmers-as-...</i>					
production	R	R	?	?	R
business	R	-	-	?	R
stewardship	R	R	R	?	R
autonomous	R	R	R	?	R
implementors of policy	R	-	-	-	-
victims	-	-	?	-	-
traditional	R	R	R	-	R
part of rural communities	-	-	-	R	-

key

- R relationship as interpreted from fieldwork data
- ? possible relationship, but not supported by fieldwork data
- no apparent relationship

7.2.1 FWAG-AS-ADVISING: TRANSFERRING CONSERVATION PRACTICES TO FARMERS

The acronym FWAG, where the A stands for Advisory, and the employment of Farm Conservation Advisers indicate that *advising* is one key way of working. Advising reveals the 'voluntary' nature of FWAG, and how it emerged as a conciliation between a range of farming and conservation organisations (Cox *et al.* 1990¹). This cluster of metaphors also reveal a message to be delivered as well as the activities of the Farm Conservation Advisers. Under this metaphor, these advisers can be seen as guides, specialists, and consultants. Farmers are seen as the main clients of an advisory service. The metaphor conceals the activities of over 1000 volunteers and other people associated with FWAG, as well as considerations as to who pays for the advising.

In 1984, the Farming and Wildlife Trust was launched to raise money to fund county-based Farm Conservation Advisers (Cox *et al.* 1990). By 1994, there were 64 county-based advisers giving advice to over 5500 farmers each year (Cousins 1995; FWAG promotional leaflets²). Advising represents one of the main images that FWAG uses to portray its activities, and one member of FWAG was adamant that "...it is purely the advice [that] farmers want to join FWAG for..." [b1]. I present a view of FWAG's structure based on national and county advisory teams, and the dominance of advising metaphors, in Figure 7.1.

Advising is closely linked to a ToT approach, where farmers are advised of what they could or should be doing with respect to their farming practices. In this section I concentrate on how people within FWAG related to a *process* of advising. I discuss the *content* of the advice in a later section.

Advising reveals a need to guide farmers (FWAG-as-guides). Farmers were seen as autonomous, and as decision makers, but they needed guidance because of complexities of farming and its effect on the environment.

¹ Cox *et al.* (1990) trace the formation and development of FWAG over its first 17 years, from the "Silsoe conference" in July 1969 where 100 farmers and conservationists were brought together to 'reconcile' farming and wildlife interests, through to the operation of a network of 64 county groups in 1986. The main organisations and government agencies involved in this period were MAFF, ADAS, RSPB, CoCo, EN, NFU and CLA (see 5.3.5 for these acronyms).

² this number does not indicate whether it is the same 5500 farmers advised each year, or whether these are 'new' farmers.

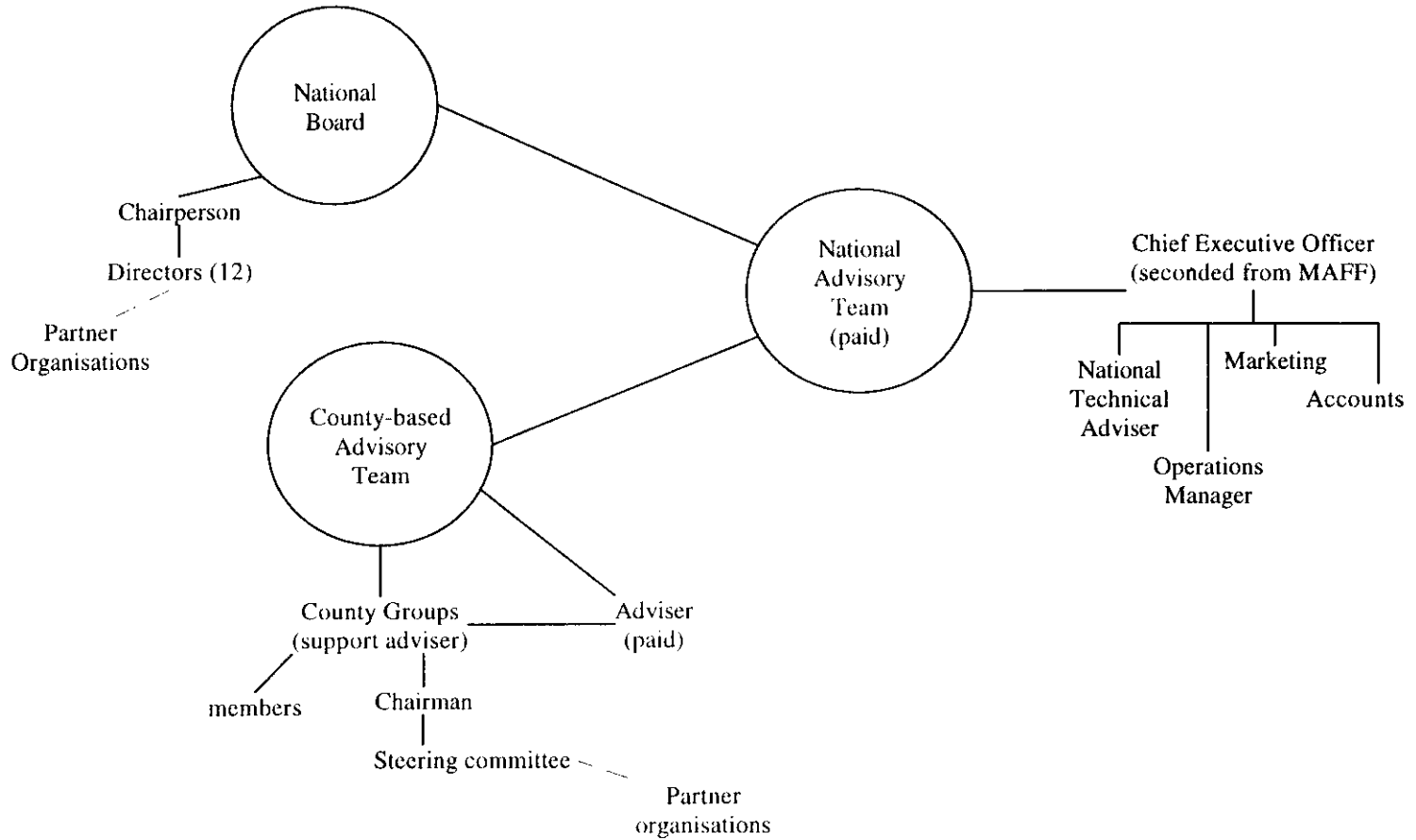


Figure 7.1 A structure of FWAG based on advising as a key way of working

Guiding farmers meant more than providing information, it included analysing information, providing options and being involved in the decision making: "... our job is not to throw more data at the farmer, our job is to explain to him how that can be used. I'll put that in front of him so he can actually make his decisions, so that he can use it..." [a1]. However, all of this was voluntary as one farmer explained: "... [the advice] is all voluntary and nothing is pushed up your nose... I can chose what I want from the list of objectives and I do not have to do anything I don't want to do" (quoted in Cousins 1995: 83).

Guiding was associated by some members with setting targets and disseminating information: "you're setting the target, and then we are saying to people how do we get there? And what you/we need to do then is to exchange information..." [a3]. This confirms links to ToT assumptions. One adviser saw analysing information in terms of a metaphor of translating "legalise and gobblygook" (such as with EU regulations) into "farmer speak" [b3]. Analysing information also entailed advice on which grants were available [e.g., d3].

Advising entailed going where the guidance was wanted, rather than by cold calling. This was called working by invitations [a1]. Working by invitation was seen by one adviser to give FWAG the "perfect target audience", those farmers who were interested [g1]. This was: "... the way that FWAG has always approached it, we have said that if we go onto a farm at the invitation of a farmer, then we are more likely to be successful than if we poke our nose in where we are not wanted..." [a1].

Working by invitation raised two issues: whether invitations can be generated, and that there was a lack of control over "the market" for advice [g1]. The time honoured way was to "go to shows and let people come and have a chat, and you say, well can I come and visit" [g1]. However, questions were raised about whether FWAG needed to be more proactive [g1], which would also require more resources on-the-ground. This adviser drew a contrast between agri-chemical representatives, who could cold-call because "they were on the farmer's side" [g1], and FWAG advisers who may not be perceived as being on the farmer's side. This adviser continued that working by invitations may not be perfect, but doubted there was a better way: "farmers are already a bit sort of nervous about who visits, and how much control they have over their own farms..." [g1].

This FWAG adviser continued that advising was seen as the core activity, which came from farm visits. Other activities, such as farm walks, were

promotional activities, which aimed to reach many people in order to: "... get more farm visits, because farm visits is where we can make, where we can hope to make things happen..." [g1].

An aspect concealed by FWAG-as-guiding was that people within FWAG recognised that they could not be in a position of doing everything. Hence guidance was all that was possible, even if they wanted to do more: "...I think that if we are not careful, we can turn FWAG into an all dancing, all singing organisation, which is giving total agricultural and agronomic advice, which we can't do" [a1]. Two alternative metaphors used were FWAG-as-consultants, and FWAG-as-specialists.

One member thought that there was no doubt that FWAG should be seen as consultants, and by implication that farmers-as-clients was an appropriate metaphor [a3]³. Consultants were there to "move information", but also to be consulted with to "...identify the issues or detail that I don't know the answers about..." and to "bring both a level of expertise and information" [a3].

One adviser stated that: "... farmers are using their conservationists in the same way that they use their agronomists, to advise them on a specialist aspect of their farming system" [b2]. However, advising on a *specialist aspect* contradicts FWAG's stance that farming and conservation are integral. Separate advice on different *aspects* would lead to countrysides being polarised. It is a good example of how some metaphors contradict. FWAG-as-specialists also raises questions of whether FWAG could or should become a conservation equivalent to ADAS, who advise on agronomic issues.

FWAG-as-specialists related very much to a desire that FWAG be seen as professional. One adviser saw being professional as being a promoter of quality where everybody had a role [c1]. However, a more common image was FWAG-as-offering independent advice [e.g., d5]. Being professional also meant being associated with a high level of expertise, and further that the expertise was needed before farmers would interact with FWAG advisers [a1, a3]. The need to bring in expertise also related to a perceived knowledge gap between what the farmers know and what the farmers *should* know⁴.

³ One member stated that "the environment [is the] number one client (of FWAG)" [a1], which is an alternative to seeing farmers-as-clients of FWAG.

⁴ and what a farmer should be told. Also there was a difference between "what a farmer wants and what a farmer needs" [a1].

The term and concept "knowledge gap" belongs to ToT language. Surprisingly, it is also consistent with metaphors of farmers-as-stewards, and FWAG's role becomes one of making farmers aware of the consequences of certain farming practices. This then was seen as the need for FWAG [a3]. Further, there was a "hell of a need for us, but that need is not accepted on some farms..." [d1]. This was illustrated by another member:

"What I would suggest is there is an awareness gap, there is a knowledge gap, therefore at some stage you actually have to bring in people with expertise, to say to the guy, there is something you might be interested in. And then get that, that's when you get him interested, that's the conceptual part, the awareness part. Then you get down to specific things... you have to bring the expertise in first to make the farmer aware that he doesn't know something. Otherwise we can all be blissfully ignorant" [a3].

An interesting contradiction to the concept of a knowledge gap was the perception that advisers needed to learn from farmers: "I suppose there is a temptation, which goes back to exchanges of information, a temptation that the advisers... are perceived to know more than the farmer, but... the farmer knows a heck of a lot more than they do" [a1]. Further there was a need to tap into the client farmer base because: "the people who really have a great deal of information, who have answers to a lot of problems being faced, are the farmers", and that there was a "lot happening out there that we don't know about" [a1]. If farmers 'know' more than advisers, then FWAG: "...in some respects [is] upside down" [a1].

Two further aspects revealed about consultancy metaphors were status and payment. Consultants were seen to have a higher status than advisers: "big business likes to have consultants, they don't want advisers... they want to be a client..." [a3], which linked to farming-as-business metaphors. Status also related to being professional. Consultants also charge for their advice and recommendations, whereas advisers, although paid, sometimes do not. In 1994, FWAG visits were generally free after joining FWAG for a membership fee, which was in the region of £20-40 per year. Hence advising was not charged for in terms of opportunity costs, as with a consultant. Charging full costs was seen to make the service unattractive to farmers, and that farmers would not pay for it. Whole farm plans were charged for but, at about £800, represented a subsidised service. Concepts of 'providing a service' and 'selling a service' were revealed by these consultancy metaphors, but these concepts in turn were contentious. If the benefits of integrating farming and conservation

also go to 'the public', then several members asked whether farmers should have to pay the cost of advice [e.g., a3].

Other members within FWAG associated advising with delivering a message, or even at an extreme with "pumping the message out" [b1]. Delivering a message took on a 'quasi-religious element' as the purpose was to "convert" farmers [b1]. Other related comments referred to "seeing the light" (the farmers that were now interested in conservation) [b2], and "philistines" (farmers with no interest in conservation) [b1]. One other person said that: "... OK there may well be other ways of doing it, but this is the gospel that we're preaching, which, you know, if you don't want to subscribe to that, then go and listen to somebody else's gospel..." [a2]. Even disregarding the language used, the thrust was to 'listen to us because we know what is right'⁵. Whilst this language, and the quasi-religious elements, were not widespread, the underlying model of transferring knowledge was often referred to implicitly in interactions.

Another example of this implicit model of transferring knowledge was: "pressing a trigger which fires a bullet" [e.g., a1]. FWAG advisers were seen to be pressing the trigger, via providing information, with the bullet being conservation action or awareness. Grants were seen as another of the triggers that a FWAG adviser could press (see section 6.2.5).

Advising metaphors focused attention on the advisers, even to the extent where the success of FWAG is attributed to the team of county-based advisers:

"to me, (the) strength of FWAG in any county is purely down to the advisers, and the quality of the advice, and the personality of the advisers, and the ability to get on with farmers... we can pontificate about things, we can say things, produce booklets, whatever... when it comes down to it, that doesn't really make that much difference... it is purely the advice is what farmers want to join FWAG for..." [b1].

Even though FWAG advisers came from a large diversity of backgrounds, they were seen to have certain personality traits such as: being highly committed, motivated and hard working, well mannered, and a 'jack of all trades'. The most highly desired trait was seen as the ability to listen and learn from farmers [a1]. I experienced county-based FWAG groups as comprised of individuals

⁵ One adviser provided a pragmatic approach to a question of ethics (what is right or wrong) by suggesting that 'right' could be seen as preventing unnecessary damage to the environment [d2].

with strong personalities rather than tightly knit groups, which perhaps reflected the high levels of commitment.

Some of the diversity in day-to-day activities of FWAG advisers is shown by Figure 7.2. 'Advising' does not appear an adequate metaphor to explain all of these activities.

*"A day at FWAG consists of..."
(or what we do as FWAG advisers)*

1. answer farmers' queries
2. visit farmers and give advice
3. liaise with conservation bodies
4. help with practical advice and implementation of practical projects
5. input into strategies, etc.
6. deliver FWAG policies
7. fill in grant forms for clients
8. fill in internal forms
9. raise finance
10. get frustrated- by lack of farmer commitment
11. get encouraged- by farmer commitment
12. listen to problems/concerns of farming industry
13. deal with volunteer groups
14. write reports for farmers
15. organise volunteer tasks
16. liaise with schools, etc.
17. promotion/publicity: organise shows, conferences, talks
18. keep national FWAG happy
19. comment on national agricultural policies
20. deliver Local Authority policy- Agenda 21

Figure 7.2 Day-to-day activities of a FWAG adviser: responses to a poster from Workshop 5⁶

⁶ These responses were intended to feed into an activity exploring metaphors of FWAG, but time constraints prohibited this (see section 9.1). A poster asked advisers to list 'what they do', as an arrival activity for workshop 5. The responses do not represent any particular order.

Nearly all of the references to farmers in interactions with FWAG members used 'he'. This raised the question of whether farming was only male-oriented, or whether FWAG were losing a valuable perspective by only talking to male farmers. However, one adviser explained how she would try to work with families and women [d2]. Gender issues in farming and countrysides did not seem to be addressed within FWAG, which was perhaps surprising given that a significant number of FWAG advisers were women.

Focusing on the advisers conceals the network of county groups, and in particular the large number of volunteers that served on county-based committees. Their activities are concealed by advising metaphors, except in the case that they act to support or 'steer' the advisers (most county groups used a 'steering committee' to support the advisers). Members of FWAG, especially chairpeople of county groups, probably contributed to networks and awareness of FWAG itself, a role not recognised by advising metaphors. Members from partner organisations may have had an influence within their own organisations, again, a role denied by advising metaphors.

FWAG-as-advising was a prominent way to describe FWAG's particular ways of working. It is largely rooted in ToT assumptions that information, or conservation practices, can be transferred to farmers. Advising metaphors focus on two groups of people, FWAG advisers and farmers, which conceals the activities of volunteers and partner organisations. An alternative metaphor highlights these 'other' activities: that of FWAG-as-uniting.

7.2.2 FWAG-AS-UNITING: DEALING WITH DIFFERENCES OF UNDERSTANDINGS

FWAG's mission was to unite farming and conservation. Uniting assumes that these are fundamentally different or divided in the first place, but then conceals attempts to appreciate this diversity. The metaphor of FWAG-as-uniting revealed FWAG's niche in bringing about future countrysides, and also the activities of volunteers and partner organisations of county FWAG groups. Some FWAG members suggested that FWAG's role in uniting could or should be changed to include lobbying, although this acted against the desires to give 'independent advice'.

Uniting farming and conservation was seen as being unique: "a lot of organisations have an interest in conservation, and a lot in farming, but there are very few who have an interest in conservation and farming" [b1, emphasis added]. The

niche is that FWAG is "out there talking to farmers in a way that nobody else is... practical farming... what they actually do..." [a2]. FWAG saw themselves as different because they recognised the economic imperatives of farming [a2; d2].

The above quote also highlights that FWAG's niche was seen in respect to other conservation organisations. Farming organisations were rarely mentioned, which either indicated that people within FWAG saw that farming organisations were obviously different because they did not take into account environmental issues or, as I discuss later, that FWAG could be seen as 'too green' for farmers. Other organisations in general were seen as "too prescriptive" [a2].

This niche of uniting farming and conservation can bring about different countrysides: "... that's our strength and we are learning now that RSPB are suddenly really beginning to target farmers, because they know if you don't influence the farmer, you can't hope to influence the countryside, because we're the people who are running the countryside. So they are all moving to that" [b1].

Metaphors of uniting farming and conservation were linked with metaphors of advising through '*the message*': "... we would argue that we're actually uniting (the two elements)... through the message that we are delivering. Because at the end of the day, if people sign up to what we are advising then they would have gone a long way of going down the path of achieving that particular aim" [a2]. If FWAG thrives, then it was seen to indicate that they were having an effect on the environment: "The most important thing is the message and the mission, and that in a way, I love to see FWAG thrive because by FWAG thriving, the message is getting to more and more people, and influencing more..." [b1]. Uniting farming and conservation through a *message* contrasts strongly with 'uniting people' or networking.

FWAG's mission to unite different interests also extended to working in partnerships with other organisations. In its promotional leaflets, FWAG prides itself in being a national forum for discussions on integrating farming and conservation. Uniting involved bringing together different interests: "... (FWAG does) bring together interests, at local level through (the) board..." [b3]. An extension of this argument might see a role for FWAG in resolving conflicts: "that's one of the roles of FWAG [isn't it], to resolve conflict" [h3].

It was suggested that FWAG should extend their niche, and be involved in lobbying: "FWAG should lead the debate on where we are going with farming... influence what is going on" [b1]. Lobbying was seen as possible because FWAG was a professional outfit with a strong farming base. One example of a lobbying stance was to link all production aids with environmental issues [b1]. However, caution was offered against lobbying: "...on whose behalf are you replying? Are you (replying) on behalf of us nationally, or on behalf of people in the counties. (We) have to be extremely careful... (because there is) variation in opinion... if (we became) too political we stand a fairly good chance of alienating (people)" [a1]. Alienation, or "being contentious" would work against FWAG's mission. Also FWAG was "not a pressure group" [a1], and it relied on voluntary measures. FWAG not being a lobbying organisation was seen as a strength because independent advice was possible, but a weakness because FWAG's profile was correspondingly lower [d5]. Another cluster of metaphors offers an explanation of why lobbying was not desired, as the interest was in encouraging and educating people.

7.2.3 FWAG-AS-ENCOURAGING AND EDUCATING PEOPLE

Two further images used by FWAG members to portray ways of working with people included FWAG-as-encouraging and FWAG-as-educating. The first referred mostly to building confidence of farmers, whereas education involved both farmers and other people. Both clusters of metaphors reveal a central role for the FWAG advisers, as well as activities such as farm walks. An education role tended to conceal an appreciation of different understandings as it was linked to "we need to educate them" assumptions.

Encouragement was seen as necessary, because many farmers had been attacked in the media for causing damage. Whereas, "... you will find that 90 % of the time... what they want to do is actually right in the landscape... it is very unusual in this area, to have to persuade somebody not to do [something]..." [d2⁷].

⁷ This quote continues: "...because they are family farmers, and have been here a lot of years, even if they weren't necessarily brought up on it, they are very much in tune with the landscape. The people that you have got to discourage, or change direction are very often people that have moved into the county rather than the ones that have always lived here" [d2].

Quite often this encouragement was seen in terms of raising awareness and building confidence:

"I walked across (a field) with a chap yesterday. It's full of weeds to him, so I am there telling him that it is a beautiful wildflower meadow... [he said] it's not practical, it's too small, it's a funny shaped piece, on undulating ground, you can't plough it... at least the young stock get some feed of it in spring, it's no good putting nitrogen on it because it doesn't respond to the nitrogen. He has got all that knowledge there, but what he has got to get is a positive attitude that that is the right thing to be doing, not, well I should be ploughing it up and improving it. And its getting it, building his pride in that matter. I would like to guarantee to you that if he takes somebody across the field today he will say, well I had somebody yesterday who was (crazy) about these weeds, and said that they wonderful, and look at these insects across here! Whereas yesterday, he was almost apologetic..." [d2].

Encouragement was also necessary because not all farmers were seen to be articulate and able to express what they are doing [e2]. Farmers worked in "isolated environments" and were "unable to communicate" [a3]. This however did not: "... undermine the level of interest that they have" [a3].

Encouragement was seen to go beyond raising awareness and include going 'one step further':

"...(a farmer) could already be a very environmentally aware farmer, doing a lot of the things that you would normally go into the average farmer and try and promote initially. He could be a long way down that road. You don't then just leave it there. Your job then is to try to find out what more you can encourage him to do. Because you already have this level of enthusiasm and achievement. And before his achievement or enthusiasm starts to wane or gets moderated by other influences that become more important in his priority setting, you need to re-emphasise the benefits of what he can then go on to achieve" [a3].

This quote concealed which influences could take a higher priority and wane a farmer's enthusiasm.

Encouragement could be seen to include 'a defence' on the autonomy of farming, that is, that farmers were generally doing the right thing and would continue given the means and awareness of what needed to be done [e.g., d2].

'The voluntary principle' in conservation is outlined in the discussions of stewardship (section 6.2.3), and FWAG was seen to have a "key role" as an agent of the voluntary principle (Cox et al 1990: 3). However, one member said there was a positive side of applying pressure: "...part of (the) ethos of FWAG is not just the advisory side, but it is also the group because there is a lot of peer pressure there, of farmers talking to farmers..." [a2].

Raising awareness was linked to the second image of FWAG-as-educating people, especially the different groups of farmers, the public, conservationists, other organisations, and government policy makers. Education of farmers was generally couched in terms of "...we want farmers to think about things now" [a1]. One adviser explained that "FWAG advisers are all about education. And the farmer who goes away having learnt something, and it sticks in his mind, and understands why that butterfly is flying around, because its food plant is over there... is going to achieve more for conservation in the long run" [h5]. FWAG advisers were needed with the "big grandiose schemes to save the countryside... (as the) people on the ground, who can help explain (and) educate" [h5].

Some FWAG offices were physically located in agricultural colleges, which meant that FWAG by being involved in teaching conservation courses, could start "steering tomorrow's farmers" [g1]. Cox *et al.* (1990) outline how education at agricultural colleges was an important activity in earlier years. During a workshop, some FWAG advisers thought it was a shame that national FWAG had decided that "colleges were not our target audience" [h1].

FWAG were involved in one county with a school-farm link scheme, which was also seen as a positive way to educate young people [c1]. Education of other organisations was seen as essential because they both overestimated the effect they could have on the landscape, and also because they had to work with people:

"...(FWAG has a) huge role in education for other organisations... a lot of their research material, couldn't do without, very useful, but they don't have means of drawing that research up into actual research practical on-the-ground work... it's all very well having that knowledge, but unless you can get it to the person on-the-ground, then that knowledge is not very much use..." [d2].

The last quote again reflects ToT assumptions of 'we educate them', rather than those emerging from, for example, 'adult education' and learning together. Another example of the ToT assumptions influencing education was a contrast

in Workshop 5 between selling a service and educating people [h*]. FWAG runs training courses for the advisers on 'selling' techniques, which could indicate that the type of education being considered is *teaching* rather than *facilitating learning*.

One of the major educational activities of FWAG was farm walks, which were seen as an effective way of reaching people and combining social activities with education. A lot of farmers came on farm walks so that they would have an opportunity to walk around someone else's farm [b2]. Farm walks were also seen as a way of educating 'the public'.

7.3 FWAG's advice and the development of the 'Landwise' advisory package

In general, FWAG's advice emphasised three main points:

- farming practices have an effect on the environment;
- conservation should be integrated with farming; and
- conservation is a whole-farm issue, not just isolated sites and habitats.

These three points were part of "Environmentally Responsible Farming", one motto used by FWAG. With a focus on individual advisers, however, 'the nature' of the advice varied quite considerably between counties. Whole farm plans were prepared if the adviser was enthusiastic about the relevance of written reports, otherwise quite specific conservation advice was given (written or verbal). Some criticisms of FWAG, and some tensions within the organisation, led to the development of an advisory package called 'Landwise'. *Selling* this advisory package invokes a different metaphor for FWAG's ways of working. This section outlines some of the content of FWAG's advice, and the development of Landwise.

7.3.1 WHOLE FARM PLANS AND SPECIFIC CONSERVATION ADVICE

Whilst FWAG emphasised not taking "one site on a farm in isolation" [a1], their advice appeared split between preparing whole farm plans (WFP) and giving specific conservation advice. The first involved considering a farm as a whole, what habitats and conservation features were apparent and what practices could enhance or create these desirable habitats. WFPs addressed what actions would be needed over several years in order to move towards integrating farming and

conservation. The second focus for advice was on specific conservation matters. This advice varied from responding to requests for information on planting trees, digging ponds or maintaining hedgerows, to preparing detailed 'technical information bulletins'. Both types of advice varied considerably between the counties.

A WFP aimed to avoid an 'oasis effect' of obtaining "little parcels of [conservation] perfection here, with a lot of grot in-between, and then another little island" [c1]. If other parts of the farm are neglected, or production is intensified to the extent that it has a negative impact on the environment, then 'an oasis' will not have as many benefits as if the whole farm is considered. Considering a farm as a whole is seen by Morris and Cobb (1993) to avoid a 'field corner mind-set', where some changes are made around the edges of fields whilst the bulk of the farm, and farming practices, are left untouched.

One commentator elaborated on WFP: "*there is a difference between a number of unrelated actions on a farm leaving hedges for the sake of leaving hedges and planting of an odd clump of trees to improve the view while shaving in the morning, and an integrated conservation plan based on a full understanding of how to provide the most valuable and varied habitat... preparing such a plan requires considerable conservation expertise which most farmers do not have...*" (Fitton 1981: 7). FWAG, of course, was seen to be in a position of being able to prepare such plans. A problem with leaving FWAG or other 'experts' to prepare plans is that it is then done for people, and there is too much emphasis on a finished product *to be implemented* rather than what people understand by that plan. Again, there appears a divide between the *doing* and the *using* of a plan (see 3.2). A plan also assumes a benign environment to be acted upon. In contrast to a plan, Morris and Cobb (1993) talk of Whole farm conservation *planning* (WFCP). Planning emphasises a process of making plans as well as a finished product, although this distinction was not directly highlighted by FWAG advisers.

WFPs revolved around farm visits, and involved the farmer (and sometimes the farming family) and the FWAG adviser walking around the farm together. This led to opportunities of "on-the-spot" verbal advice, though FWAG placed emphasis on a written WFP. One adviser outlined a tension that perhaps too much emphasis was placed on written reports, whereas the on-the-spot verbal

advice was where the farmer's attention was likely to be highest [g1]. One FWAG member outlined a pressing need to have a written report, as it was a form of indemnity and proof that certain advice was or was not given [a1].

The long term nature of WFPs was recognised, and some advice would not be able to be acted upon in the short term, because deeper changes were needed: "we don't expect those whole farm plans to be implemented in the first 5 years, even 10 or 25 years ... but you have got to look at it that far ahead" [a1]. An example given was that FWAG recommended not applying fertiliser in autumn as it led to leaching of nutrients and damaged the environment. However, if a farmer can not avoid putting slurry out in autumn because of (say) a shortage of labour, then FWAG advisers could explain how this damages the environment and wasted money, and how in the longer term, changes in "the system" may become possible [a1]. The time scale also represented the long term commitment for some measures, and perhaps was also 'intrinsic' when talking about countrysides.

WFPs in general were seen as creative opportunities for advice. All reports contained farm maps, and often these were colour coded with different wildlife habitats and also what work needed to be carried out to maintain or enhance a habitat [d3]. For example, "I have gone over his map in colour pens, and I have marked the hedges, which hedges have got to be repaired in the first year, which in the second and which in the third year. So now all he has got to do is glance at the map and say right, we are doing those this year... it is very much a process to get the work done... they are so busy doing other things, just to survive" [d2]. Reports had to be simple, and visual means were desirable, such as the use of photographs [d3]. One adviser included budgets, and a cost analysis of certain agricultural and conservation options [b2]. Diversity in the length and detail of the reports also led to a concern that there was not enough *consistency* between counties, and contributed to a push within FWAG for a standardised report.

The next section considers some of the criticisms of FWAG's advice and their ways of working, as well as some of the tensions apparent within the organisation.

7.3.2 CRITICISMS, TENSIONS AND DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS FOR FWAG

FWAG celebrated 25 years of operation in 1994, but it is not without its critics. Although FWAG has potential to be involved in bringing about future countrysides, they have been criticised as their 'impact' on farming and conservation is seen to be low. Most of the criticisms are quite dated, and perhaps not accurate, as FWAG has changed considerably even over the past five years. A number of organisational tensions were also apparent. During 1994, FWAG actively sought some new directions including making FWAG more consistent between counties and putting more focus onto 'hard-core' farming issues. These criticisms, tensions and possible directions indicated other metaphors appropriate for FWAG, and also led to the introduction of 'Landwise'.

The main criticism levelled against FWAG is that they have had a limited effect on farming and conservation. 5500 farmers receiving visits each year is one of the most optimistic figures produced, yet this does not say how many farmers acted on that advice, nor what proportion of farmers that represents (less than 5%)⁸. Blunden and Curry (1985: 183) imply that the perceived limited effect on countrysides is due to the scale of operations: "*one adviser in a county can only expect to reach a small proportion of the farmers, even over a five-year period*". Even though some counties employ two or three advisers, there appear limitations to advising as a way of bringing about change in farming and countrysides.

Rogers *et al.* (1985: 56) focus on which farmers FWAG actually reach: "*... at the moment, most local FWAGs preach to the converted and have had little impact on the vast majority of farmers and landowners who do not have a strong personal commitment to conservation*". Bishop and Phillips (1993: 317) concluded that "*...for most farmers, FWAG's call went unheeded; financial pressures and a traditional view, prompted by government policy, about the need to increase production were far more compelling considerations than considering land management*". By implication, only those farmers interested and able to invest in conservation did so, and perhaps they would have done so without FWAG. Those that were not interested, or unable to invest, would not make any changes. 'Preaching to the converted' was acknowledged by several

⁸ This does not include advice given by telephone [a1].

advisers, although it was perhaps seen as an inevitable effect of working by invitation [g1]. FWAG were concerned that they only reached "about 30% of farmers" [a1], and membership only represented some 1-10% of the farmers in different areas. One member commented cynically that: "most farmers don't give a monkeys" or care about FWAG [e2].

Bishop and Phillips (1993) also criticise the type of projects promoted, such as pond digging and planting field corners, that lead to intensification elsewhere on the farm. This ignored the WFP approach promoted by FWAG, but other commentators also imply that FWAG mainly advise on secondary habitats (Lowe *et al.* 1986) and trivialise conservation by undertaking cosmetic measures (see Cox *et al.* 1990). However, these authors themselves have indicated that projects like tree planting are a start and a place to build on (see also Carter 1989a,b). Large scale changes can only come with a change in understandings, and that a small step can lead to other larger steps.

People within FWAG questioned whether they have drifted *away* from its farming base, and hence emphasised a tighter integration between farming and conservation. Fertilisers and pesticides were two core farming operations that FWAG perceived a need to advise on:

"five years ago FWAG didn't ever talk about pesticides. If they were released by and approved by MAFF for use on farms, that was it, we couldn't say anything, we didn't say anything else. To be honest we think that's (arrant) nonsense, what you want to do is tell farmers there are differences between the different materials, they have different impacts on the environment, and therefore be aware of that. We don't say don't use them, we say make sure you know the potential impact of anything you are using. It's the same with fertilisers... (and) the quality of wildlife habitats either on the farm or nearby, or quite often some distance away is directly related to their use" [a1]. Advising on fertilisers would: "... emphasise both to our own people and to the outside world, that FWAG is talking about farming issues" [a1].

Australia's Landcare (see Campbell 1994) arose in conversations as an example of an institution that has a distinct farming focus. Landcare addressed "joint farming problems, such as erosion or salinity" [a1]. But "we haven't got that focus in

this country" [a1]. Having a joint farming focus appeared to be desirable⁹. A focus such as 'viable wildlife habitats'¹⁰ was possible, but this was not farming based: "I'm hesitant to go out to farmers and talk to them about the ecological issues without some farming background to it..." [a1]. This probably explained the desire to focus on fertilisers and pesticide use. FWAG's appearances at two major arable farming shows during 1995, 'Cereals' and 'Sprays and Sprayers', were associated with precision farming, which again showed a desire to focus on farming issues.

Another documented criticism is raised by Cox *et al.* (1990), who noted that even though FWAG "*is the prime expression of the voluntary principle in conservation*" (*ibid.*, p2), it is an "*...exaggeration to claim that FWAG has had a major impact on the course of conservation policies over the last decade*" (*ibid.*, p174). Influencing policy is not necessarily an appropriate measure of whether FWAG is effective or not, especially as under metaphors of advising farmers *changing* policy would be rather peripheral. However, the argument presumably used by these authors is that if FWAG was successful at integrating conservation and farming, then this should be reflected in policies. This criticism would need to be re-examined in light of policies such as Countryside Stewardship (CS) which build on 'the voluntary principle', and also with considerations of whether FWAG is trying to influence policies or not. An implication of FWAG trying to influence policies would be that it assumes that farmers-as-implementors of policy is an appropriate metaphor to work with.

In addition to 'external pressures' and criticisms, internal tensions within FWAG contributed to a perceived lack of effect. Two sets of tensions between national and county groups, and professional staff and volunteers, can be attributed to an over-reliance on metaphors of FWAG-as-advising.

FWAG was seen as diverse, to the extent that it was difficult: "...to tie together an organisation as diverse as FWAG" [b1]. The diversity referred to the county groups and the type of advice being offered and led to tensions between the national levels and the counties. A tension arose because: "... there are different needs perceived at different times" [a1]. Local level groups and advisers did not

⁹ FWAG explored whether 'group farm schemes' could provide a joint focus in one county. One rationale for this is that wildlife is not confined to farm boundaries [d2].

¹⁰ 'Viable wildlife habitats' were a second ecological concept that referred to needing areas of habitats large enough to support viable animal and plant populations. 'Wildlife corridors' might contribute to viable habitats, by linking habitats.

have the national overview of FWAG [a1]. However, some local groups were "too parochial" [c1].

Given these tensions, one observation was that: "... maybe (FWAG) shouldn't be run on a national basis. We think we should. But to be run on a national basis, you have to have some element of consistency" [a1]. Obtaining funding from national organisations was seen as difficult unless FWAG could assure a consistent approach between county groups [a1]. A national meeting of FWAG advisers in 1994 considered whether a 'corporate identity' could cover the need for consistency [b2].

Tensions were especially manifest in a perceived duplication of effort between county groups [b2], that is, that county groups were re-inventing the same wheel [a1]. For example, there were strong views that new legislation on set-aside shouldn't have to be read by individuals within different counties. Rather one person should read it and prepare a synopsis to be distributed to local groups. National FWAG could do this [b1], or somebody within county groups if their work roles were redefined [b2]. An informal network between county advisers was recognised, as was potential to ensure that 'what' advisers discussed be distributed more widely [a1]. However, this member of FWAG continued that FWAG does not "nanny" farmers, so "...we would offer the same procedure in our organisation, where people in the organisation have that responsibility... to extend their knowledge by talking with others [in the organisation]..." [a1].

The second organisational tension was between the professional (paid) and voluntary FWAG personnel. Professional staff include the national executive, and county advisers. FWAG as an organisation consists of some 70-80 professionals, but also over 1000 volunteers. Some of these volunteers had an active role in establishing the directions and activities of FWAG, especially chairs of county groups, local committees, steering committees, and board members. It was "always difficult to reconcile the interests of volunteers, with the paid staff and the needs of the organisation" [a2]. This member questioned whether volunteers could be 'selected' or not. Traditionally, county-based committees were comprised of representatives of certain organisations, whereas a different focus was to have "relevant expertise" on the committees [a2], presumably by choosing people.

These criticisms and tensions contributed to FWAG actively seeking different directions. Two possible suggestions were quickly dismissed: extending the

remit of FWAG past the voluntary principle, and making FWAG a 'grants-broker'. Shirley (1981: 17) suggested that the work of FWAG "... *could be more efficiently harnessed to any improved system of controls and measures*". This could be taken as support for FWAG's educational roles, but also that an institution like FWAG could implement policy. This would necessitate statutory provisions for FWAG, which would act against its 'voluntary' nature. If 'cross compliance' was extended so that mandatory WFP's were needed to obtain agricultural support, then FWAG might have a different role. However, the directions chosen by FWAG were to increase emphasis on 'core-farming' issues and to extend WFPs to give a consistent product over all the county groups. The latter was called 'Landwise'.

7.3.3 LANDWISE: A METAPHOR OF FWAG-AS-MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS

Landwise was launched in October 1995, and was an attempt to give consistency, relevance and viability to FWAG. Landwise aims to give structure to the advice given: a structure that uses the collective experiences of FWAG over 26 years of advising [a1]. The basic structure is to start out with a simple message, and then progressively develop it over time. An assumption is that as a farmer's understanding develops, different sorts of actions become possible. Promotional leaflets outline three products included in Landwise, which increase in complexity:

- The Landwise Report, which is free to new members;
- The Landwise Review; and
- The Landwise Plan, which is charged for at the adviser's daily rate.

One FWAG member summarised four aspects that comprise Landwise:

"One is that we will give him a vision, give him his vision. Two we will make sure we list his long and short term objectives, and along with that his work guide for at least the first year. The third one is that we will talk to him about his farming operations... and the fourth issue is the one that says 'I can't afford to do this', so we will give him zero-budget options... that don't cost any money" [a1]¹¹.

¹¹ again, note the constant use of 'him' to describe a farmer.

A promotional leaflet, as well as outlining the three products included in Landwise, indicated some slightly different metaphors to integrating farming and conservation ("Landwise: getting ahead on the farm"). The first, FWAG-as-selling a package, expands on the advising metaphors, and suggests that there is a comprehensive package to be delivered to farmers. The 'selling' aspect suggests a 'pre-packaged' product, although part of Landwise involves the farmer articulating his or her visions and goals for the farm, which advisers would try to incorporate into an overall package. FWAG does offer some sales training to its advisers, which indicated that *selling* could be another metaphor for their ways of working. A second metaphor, FWAG-as-consistent, reflects the structure that advisers should follow in giving advice. FWAG was concerned that a lack of consistency might constrain its advice. A third metaphor, FWAG-as-meeting the environmental challenge, represents a vastly different approach. A section in the pamphlet used the following heading and statement: "*Getting ahead of environmental demands. Environmental awareness on the farm has always been desirable. It is now becoming a commercial imperative...*". Farming-as-a business has underlined many of the metaphors of FWAG, and one advertising motto used by FWAG was *Conservation means business*. However, the use of the word 'demand' suggested a loss of farmers' autonomy not apparent in previous FWAG pamphlets and bulletins. In other places "environmental challenge" is used instead of environmental demands, and the implication is that the environment was making demands on farming, perhaps indirectly through legislation and pressure groups.

Initial reactions amongst advisers to the 'new product' of Landwise varied. Reactions to *using* Landwise could not be gauged, as Landwise was only just coming into effect as I finished my fieldwork. One adviser in particular enjoyed the advantages of being able to approach sponsors with confidence of being able to deliver a product [d2], which indicated that perhaps FWAG was trying to reach a larger audience with Landwise than just farmers. Questions about how it fits in with giving specific advice, and other activities of FWAG, are unanswered. Landwise is only one part of FWAG's overall activities. Whether Landwise is able to give FWAG the farming focus that it desired also remains to be seen.

What may not be apparent from this narrative of Landwise is how the tensions, criticisms and possible directions acted as triggers for change. Landwise gave coherence to a 'top-down' desire to change FWAG, particularly to desires to

make FWAG more consistent between county groups. Landwise still seems grounded in ToT assumptions, which imply that advising is still a very dominant image. Other images may have led to a different initiative, although FWAG-as-Landwise may become a powerful (and effective) metaphor for FWAG's ways of working which complements some of the other metaphors of FWAG.

7.4 Drawing the images together: appropriate, disabling and alternative metaphors

The joint cluster of FWAG-as-encouraging and FWAG-as-educating stands out as being an appropriate cluster of metaphors, *provided* that education is not restricted to 'we educate them'. If education was restricted like this, then the cluster would probably be disabling. The discussion with FWAG advisers in workshop 5 suggested that these advisers, at least, were willing to consider what metaphors of education might entail other than a transfer of knowledge. Metaphors of encouragement can focus attention on building relationships, so in that sense I judge it appropriate.

I judge FWAG-as-advising as being disabling, especially because of its ToT connotations and separation of activities. Advising metaphors concealed the roles and activities of different people within FWAG, such as volunteers and members of partner organisations, and masked networking considerations. Advising does not cover the full richness of what is entailed in visiting a farm and interacting with farmers and other people involved in bringing-forth future countrysides.

FWAG-as-uniting is difficult to judge, as it is appropriate because it reveals relationship building, but disabling as it conceals a diversity of understandings. Hence I will leave it as unjudged. I will also leave FWAG-as-Landwise unjudged, because it seems too early to ascertain how people are using Landwise.

*The alternative metaphor that I propose is based on countrysides-as-networks of conversation. Many aspects of FWAG's operations could be re-cast and described as facilitating networks. That is, one way of working for FWAG could involve *facilitating* networks of conversation. I do not mean that FWAG should become the *only* facilitators of conversations of how future countrysides can come about, instead facilitation is a different way for FWAG to reflect on, and organise, its structure and activities. Facilitation reveals attempts to create*

space for change, rather than changing understandings *per se*. However, this metaphor conceals the skills needed and the changes to people's roles needed within FWAG if this metaphor were to inform FWAG's ways of working.

I contrasted *facilitation* and *providing information* in a report designed to contribute to FWAG's strategic planning process ("Some strategic questions for FWAG", 1994-5). Reactions to this report likened facilitation to being catalysts [a1, a3], even though these can be seen as distinct. FWAG-as-catalysts was not seen as appropriate or possible because of funding constraints: "...to be a catalyst, you've got to have an organisation which is funded to act as a catalyst. It doesn't come out of thin air" [a1]. Funding meant that: "there are certain things you can afford to do, and certain things you've got to do" [a3]. Catalysing metaphors were also not appropriate because FWAG: "...is not there simply to stimulate awareness and then seek advice. I think it is expected to be made up of a certain level of expertise and the ability to debate to improve the awareness" [a3]. A lack of perceived benefits in networking was also revealed: "nobody wants to network, unless there are benefits... you don't offer somebody a networking system unless you want something in exchange..." [a3].

Facilitating networks were implicit in activities such as farm walks, and also through partner organisations being on local and national boards of FWAG. However, bringing together organisations was couched in terms of bringing in outside expertise [cf. a1]. Bringing farmers together was couched in terms of information exchange rather than creating a space for dialogue: "so we need to bring together the farmers, as the farmers who will say well I have been doing it this way, and another chap well have you thought of doing it that way" [a3]. The day-to-day activities of FWAG supported the image that networking metaphors were relevant, but advising metaphors seemed to squash these issues. One activity that might become more prominent under metaphors of facilitation, is that of evening discussion groups. FWAG do have quite a lot of evening activities, but the emphasis does not seem to be on *discussion*. The Game Conservancy was an example of an organisation that were exploring the use of evening discussion groups, though apparently with the aim to increase the dissemination of their research results.

Facilitating networks requires many of the skills and considerations that I outlined as necessary for a researcher-facilitator. Facilitation involves different roles for volunteers and members, as well as FWAG advisers, as partners in a joint project of bringing-about future countryside. I address similar issues to

how people within FWAG might experience these different ways of working in Chapter 9. At this stage, however, I propose metaphors of *facilitation* as invitations to members of FWAG to consider different ways of working which are *not* grounded in ToT assumptions.

7.5 Reflections on Chapter 7

I sent an earlier draft of this chapter to two individuals within FWAG for comments, some of which I have incorporated. Their reactions were encouraging, and it seems that the chapter, as well as previous conversations, *have* triggered reflections on their ways of working. I did not send the draft to FWAG as an organisation, as that needs a different sort of document than a chapter of a PhD thesis. It also entails a commitment to *jointly* exploring metaphors of FWAG with their members, which is outside of the scope of this thesis and an exploration of a 'window' onto the research context.

The feedback on this chapter raised one issue about my judgements that I have tended to gloss over, even in the reflections in Chapter 5. If I label a metaphor as disabling, for example, then that implies that it is not suitable for *any* context. This sort of 'absolute' case is plainly counter to my consideration of metaphors, and also to my claim that metaphors can complement and contradict each other. The specific feedback from the individuals within FWAG emphasised that advising was a relevant activity *as well as* other ways of working, and that the disabling features were more due to "getting hung up on" a narrow focus on ToT. The history of an organisation and the way it is funded are ignored in my judgements of *appropriate*, *disabling*, and *alternative* metaphors. I intend the judgements to contribute to a further exploration of the research context, rather than to exclude certain metaphors totally, which may not be implied by the way I have analysed the metaphors. This is an area that I have to give more thought to. I do need to emphasise that the judgements are mine, and I make them from with a certain (researcher) context. I do not intend that they should be *adopted* by people within an entirely different context. In the next chapter I outline an alternative to a researcher making judgements about the research context, and also how metaphors can be jointly brought-forth and explored.

Chapter 8 Using metaphors in research

Metaphors provide ways of creating space for understandings to emerge

In this chapter, I elaborate on the fourth response to the thesis question. I have just established that metaphors can provide a way to gain an understanding of the research context. Two issues follow on from this use of metaphors:

- can metaphors provide a way for *co-researchers* to gain an understanding of the research context; and
- what are *other* ways that an awareness of metaphors can inform research?

The methods that I used to bring forth metaphors emphasised relationship building and involve a high degree of interaction. If I bring forth and explore metaphors then this may well serve as a site for people to reflect on their understandings, merely because they have to organise their thoughts in order to talk to me. However, I am interested in whether metaphors can be used to create a space where reflecting on understandings can be explicit, transparent and structured. I claim that *jointly* bringing forth and exploring metaphors, through dialogue, can provide ways of creating a space where understandings can emerge. I am only interested in understandings of the research context at this stage, although it may be possible to explicitly reflect on a range of understandings such as 'how we can learn' and 'what research can mean in my context'.

The second issue is to explore how other researchers and practitioners have used metaphors, either implicitly or explicitly. An awareness of metaphors can inform research in a range of ways. Metaphors are explicitly used in: teaching, problem solving, family therapy and managing organisations (to name a few). In this chapter, I discuss some of these implicit and explicit uses as they pertain to both institutional and diverse stakeholder contexts. I start by considering what it means to *use* metaphors.

8.1 Can we use metaphors in research?

The terms *use* and *using* have instrumentalist connotations which might not be appropriate for talking about metaphors in research. *Use* implies that the objectives have already been decided, and it is just a matter of deciding what

tool can meet those objectives. Can metaphors be thought of as tools to be used in research?

Morgan (1993: 265) uses the image "*our ways of thinking become hammers, and every problem becomes a nail*". Morgan claims that if people use only one, or a few, metaphors then they only have one particular tool at their disposal. However, if we are aware of many metaphors, and how metaphors shape our understandings, then we have a "*toolbox that encourages us to use a hammer when a hammer is needed or else to develop another, more appropriate tool*" (*ibid.*, p267). Under this image, a more appropriate tool is another metaphor that is chosen for a purpose.

Schön (1963: 124) highlights two features of a tool:

- it does something already anticipated and implies all action is purposeful and goal directed; and
- it "changes" something, but is not changed itself apart from wear and defects.

A 'tool' metaphor conceals an *emergence* of understandings, and hence it seems inappropriate to talk of metaphors-as-tools. Further, if metaphors are unavoidable, and also tacit, then how can we speak of choosing and using metaphors for a specific purpose? Maybe it is better to talk of 'metaphors using us' (R. Coyne, University of Edinburgh, 1996: pers.comm.).

Boland (1989) and Watson (1995a) attack the idea that metaphors can be seen as tools, as it assumes a position outside of language from which to view language. Further, "*...metaphors are nested in complex relationships with other metaphors, we simply cannot pick one out and use it in any clear and precise way*" (Watson 1995a: 219; Boland 1989). Watson also builds on Schön's (1963) theme that assumptions are "smuggled in" by using a particular metaphor. She does not deny that we use metaphors, rather that we can not think about using a metaphor instrumentally.

I propose an alternative to talking of 'using particular metaphors-as-tools' or 'metaphors-as-a toolbox': *researchers can use an awareness of metaphors to inform their activities*. Emphasis moves from using individual metaphors to a

way of thinking using metaphors.¹ My presentation of the hermeneutic circle, and attempts to create a space for where different understandings can emerge rather than changing understandings, should indicate that I am not talking of using metaphors in an instrumentalist way. With these comments in mind, I now consider different approaches that implicitly or explicitly use metaphors.

8.2 Approaches using metaphors

In an earlier chapter I claimed that metaphors can be used to *explain*, *appreciate* and *create* different understandings. Research approaches could probably be classified under this 'typology'. However, imposing such a typology conceals the diversity of approaches which use metaphors. The discussion in earlier chapters can be called explaining or appreciating different understandings (and the next two chapters as 'creating different understandings'). However, the diverse activities concealed within this include:

- reflecting on my understanding of research;
- gaining an understanding of the research context;
- listening to diverse understandings;
- building relationships; and
- structuring a research report in terms of metaphors (metaphors-as-headings).

A task of exploring 'metaphor' approaches is similar to bringing forth and exploring the metaphors of countrysides, and hence I use a similar process of using diagramming and tables (Figure 8.1 and Table 8.1).

The clusters that I discuss are:

- explicit uses of metaphors to grasp and extend concepts;
- interventions in organisations;
- uses of metaphors in family therapy; and
- uses in agriculture, rural development and diverse stakeholder contexts.

¹ I recognise that 'metaphor' is a metaphor, and hence this way of thinking using metaphors is just one way out of many.

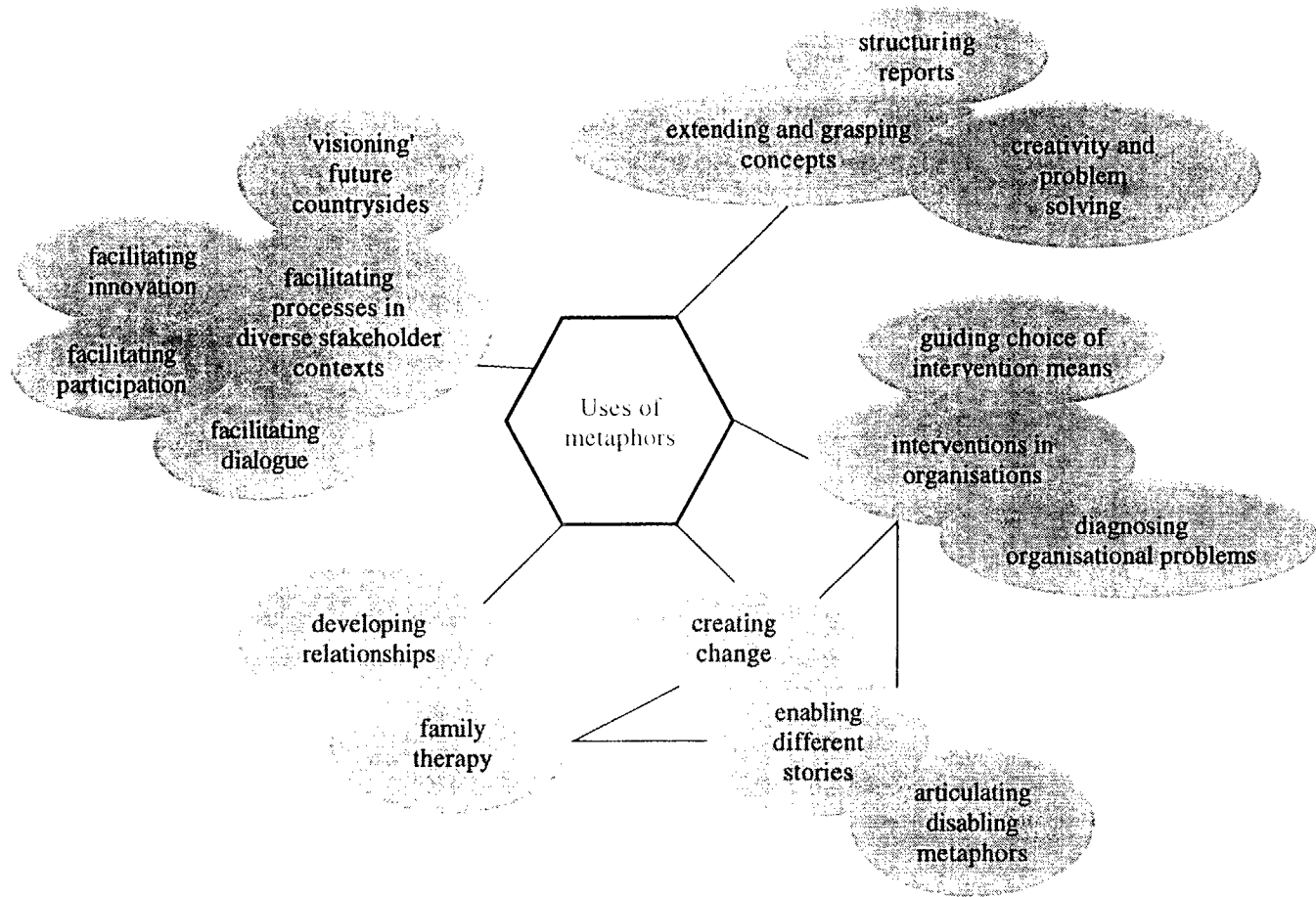


Figure 8.1 An overview of ways of using metaphors in research

Table 8.1 An overview of ways of using metaphors in research

Purpose	Context	Examples	Reveals	Conceals
Structuring reports	various	* Soyland (1994) * Sternberg (1990) * Morgan (1986)	* metaphors-as-headings * -as- explanations	* how metaphors can inform research design
'Grasping' concepts	Teaching and communication	* Merali and Martin (1994) * Krippendorff (1993)	* understandings structured by metaphors	* assumes somebody has 'grasped' * choosing appropriate metaphors
Developing new concepts	Creativity and problem solving	* Schön (1979) * Martin (1991)	* creativity and emergence	* choosing appropriate metaphors
Articulating disabling metaphors	various	* Sontag (1989)	* metaphors are both enabling and disabling	* who decides?
Diagnosing organisational problems	Organisations	* Morgan (1986; 1993) * Flood and Jackson (1991)	* metaphors provide ways of seeing	* role of experts
Guiding choice of intervention means	Organisations	* Flood and Jackson (1991)	* diagnosing dominant metaphors * assumptions within different methods	* dominant metaphors may not be appropriate? * convergence on metaphors * who decides?

Table 8.1 An overview of ways of using metaphors in research (Continued)

Creating change	Organisations	* Morgan (1986; 1993)	* invitations to respond * 'what-if' approach * emergent and proposed metaphors	* roles assumed by 'change-agents' * restrictions to change
Developing relationships	Family therapy	* Combs and Freedman (1990)	* intimacy * common uses of metaphors	* purpose of relationships * limitations with a <i>problem-solving</i> approach
Enabling different stories to be told	Family Therapy; Organisations	* Combs and Freedman (1990) * Morgan (1993)	* metaphors underlie stories * reframing * conditions for story-telling	
Facilitating innovation and social learning	Agriculture and Rural Development	* Engel (1995)	* 'windows' * creating, sharing and validating images * networking	* convergence on metaphors
Facilitating 'participation'	Agriculture and Rural Development	* Cornwall <i>et al.</i> (1994)	* visual techniques * (metaphors implicit)	
Visioning- creating visions	UK Countrysides	* O'Riordan <i>et al.</i> (1993)	* articulation of visions and images * <i>different media (e.g. paintings)</i>	* convergence on metaphors

8.2.1 EXPLICIT USES OF METAPHORS TO GRASP AND EXTEND CONCEPTS

Explicit use of metaphors is especially apparent in teaching and problem solving. These two uses are consistent with claims that metaphors both structure understandings and also reveal and conceal different aspects of our realities. These uses reveal that highlighting metaphors indeed acts as a type of tool: to aid and extend understandings. A concealed aspect, however, is that these uses place a lot of emphasis on choosing relevant metaphors.

Using metaphors for teaching: "...enable(s) the student to grasp and assimilate an abstract concept..." (Merali and Martin 1994: 14). The use of metaphors in teaching is justified on the ground that we understand new unfamiliar things or concepts in terms of familiar things, and that metaphors establish: "*common points of reference for the positioning of the 'new' concept in the 'knowing' of the audience*" (*ibid.*, p15). The authors espouse experiential learning, so presumably do not mean to imply that metaphors can be used to 'impart knowledge'. Mooij (1976: 16) strengthens a link between metaphors and experiential learning, and talk in terms of metaphors playing a key role in the "*assimilation of experience*".

Patton (1990) implies that grasping of concepts is needed for the communication of research findings, which appears similar to using metaphors-as-headings to structure research reports. Several authors have used metaphors explicitly to structure their writings, such as Morgan (1986), Soyland (1994) and Sternberg (1990). I do not consider here the countless authors that have used metaphors to emphasise a certain point, such as Rorty's (1989) image of language-as-a coral reef, that I cited in Chapter 2.

Merali and Martin (1994: 15) also distinguish between familiar metaphors and surprising metaphors:

"... a familiar metaphor may well be appropriate in communicating and explaining ideas in a teaching situation; however, a surprising (but contextually appropriate) metaphor may be more useful in stimulating participants to generate and develop novel concepts" (emphasis original).

'Surprising' metaphors lead to a second way in which metaphors have been explicitly used: to enhance creativity and problem solving. The example that I

used in Chapter 2, the development of a new paintbrush (Schön 1979), is couched in these terms: product development staff solve a problem of making an effective paintbrush that uses artificial fibres. Linzey (1994: 32) notes that *"ironic metaphors can serve a critical, self-reflective function in professional training, as paradoxical invitations to entertain the unthinkable"*. Martin (1991) outlines some techniques drawing on metaphors to visualise and re-cast certain problems. Metaphors can be used for creativity and problem solving as they have *"an apparent ability to give access to unconscious material"* (Schön 1963: 88), a point that Shotter (1993: 56) elaborates on:

"... what [metaphors] do do for us, in artificially creating an order where none before existed, is to make an aspect of our language use 'pictureable'; that is, to both (1) make that aspect of our language use 'rationally visible'... and thus publicly discussible and debatable; and also (2) make it into a 'psychological instrument'... and thus into something, a practical resource, with which and through which we can think, act and perceive".

Davies and Ledington (1988), within the context of a Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) inquiry, describe the active listening for the *"anecdotal use of metaphors"* (*ibid.*, p34). These metaphors could then be developed to extend people's understandings. They give an example where somebody unwittingly used a metaphor of a 'car'. Development of this metaphor included considering different types of cars and different perspectives on a car (this latter group might include drivers, mechanics, salespeople). They concluded that the development of metaphors can aid *"in dealing with conservative thinking, premature thinking in terms of solutions, and politically difficult situations"* (*ibid.*, p35).

8.2.2 INTERVENTION IN ORGANISATIONS, AND GARETH MORGAN'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Many approaches in organisational studies have explicitly used metaphors (see Oswick and Grant 1996). These approaches either build on 'creativity and problem solving', as discussed above, or on intervention by managers or consultants. A lot of the latter approaches appear to build on the seminal work of Gareth Morgan. I discuss two specific approaches in this section, Morgan's (1986; 1993) *Imaginization*, and Flood and Jackson's (1991a,b) *Total Systems Intervention* (TSI).

Although Gareth Morgan has published previously, it is Images of Organization (1986) that is widely acclaimed in organisational studies. One of the key phrases in the book is: "*what if you considered your organization as ... [Y]*", where Y represents different images such as machines, organisms, brains, cultures, and so on. Morgan develops a select number of metaphors, and 'locates' different theories relating to organisations under each metaphor (metaphors-as-headings). Morgan demonstrates that there are many ways of looking at an organisation, which many of the management theories that he discusses do not acknowledge. Indeed "*organizations are many things at once*" (*ibid.*, p339).

Morgan further claims that "*many organizational problems rest in our ways of thinking*" (*ibid.*, p331-5). Metaphors are presented as opportunities to "reframe" understandings, and also to manage and design organisations, through "the injunction of metaphor", which directly links ways of thinking with action. Considering metaphors thus allows *prescriptive* possibilities for management and organisational design (*ibid.*, p331).

Morgan uses an overarching image of organisation-as-text (see Shotter 1993). Situations which managers face in an organisation could be "read" using different metaphors. As a consultant, Morgan uses metaphors to: "*...produce a diagnostic reading of the situation being analysed, and then [produce] a critical evaluation of how the insights relate*" (1986: 16, emphasis original). Morgan is quick to point out that his interest is in "*a way of thinking rather in the mechanistic application of a small set of clearly defined analytical frameworks*" (*ibid.*, p16). He coins the expression "imaginization" to describe a process of using images and metaphors in these ways.

At the end of Images of Organization, Morgan says:

"I have chosen to do this through metaphor... but one does not have to accept this thesis. The much more general point is that our ways of seeing the world are bounded ones, and that much can be learned by appreciating the partial nature of our understandings and how they can be broadened. I have used metaphor to show how we can frame and reframe our understanding of the same situation, in the belief that new kinds of understandings can emerge from the process" (*ibid.*, p339).

This caution probably reflects Morgan's audience and his desire to be practical, and the caution disappears in his (1993) sequel: Imaginization. In this book,

Morgan concentrates on developing an approach to intervening in organisations, and creating a 'toolbox'. Creating metaphors, or new tools is linked to "*personal empowerment*" and allowing people to grasp different opportunities (cf. p14).

Morgan outlines his basic protocol of *imaginization* in terms of five steps:

- 'get inside';
- adopt the role of a learner;
- 'Map the terrain';
- identify key themes and interpretations (to produce an evolving reading of the situation); and
- confirm, refute and reformulate throughout (1993: 301).

Morgan claims that producing a diagnostic reading can be presented to those people within the situation. With the "injunction" of metaphor (that they are acted upon), presenting a reading of metaphors is in effect the same as presenting an action plan.

Morgan espouses some Action Research type principles (see Appendix B of *Imaginization*), but considers his position mainly as a "reader" of a situation. This explains his emphasis on "diagnosis". At times Morgan tries to decrease his impact on the process of considering new metaphors:

"...the ideal situation is one where the researcher minimises his or her influence, so that the situation can be understood on its own terms as far as possible... (and) the ultimate aim would be to create understandings and explanations that are entirely 'grounded' in the words, concepts, ideas and theories of the participants involved..."
(1993: 301-2).

At other times, a more evocative role is espoused: "*the aim... is to disrupt normal ways of seeing so that people can ask constructive questions about what they are seeing and what they are doing.... [and metaphor] creates distance and space from conventional ways of thinking: space in which people can feel free to think and act creatively*" (p288). This more evocative role is more in the line of a 'facilitator' or 'change-agent', and is more consistent with seeing *Imaginization* as a process of personal empowerment and change (p271). However, it indicates a weakness in Morgan's writings, that he has

largely ignored his own prejudices during inquiry. A cogent example of this is a diagram of different perspectives on a situation (such as managers, staff, and politicians), that leaves out his own role or view (see Exhibit 5.4, p120).

I later discuss a distinction that Morgan implicitly makes between *emergent* and *proposed* metaphors. Morgan's main contribution however, is in developing an approach around *using* metaphors: one that ties together aspects of creativity, relationship building, effecting change, and staff empowerment. The "what if" formulation is very simple, alerts people to multiple possibilities, and can create a space where different stories can be told. Some shortcomings of his research are:

- it uses limited notions of metaphor and does not consider much of the literature regarding metaphor²;
- it is very much steeped in his role as an "expert" and his skills in reading and proposing relevant metaphors; and
- it assumes a fairly tightly bounded and easily identified concept (an organisation), to be 'got inside' and explored.

Flood and Jackson's (1991 a,b) *Total Systems Intervention* (TSI) continues the theme of investigating an organisation in terms of metaphors. The novel aspect of TSI is then to use those metaphors to determine what sort of systems-based intervention is appropriate³. TSI consists of three phases:

- creativity - exploring an organisation by using metaphors;
- choice - of means of intervention; and
- implementation - of the means of intervention⁴.

² The most explicit consideration of metaphor was: it "works by playing on a pattern of similarity and difference. Its user seeks to evoke the similarities [between the two terms in a metaphor] while downplaying the differences" (*ibid.*, p290).

³ Presumably, the authors mean "subsequent" intervention, as surely diagnosis is part of an intervention! TSI is updated in Flood (1995) *Solving Problem Solving*, Wiley, Chichester. The only change that affects the use of metaphors seems to be that other creativity techniques, such as brainstorming, can guide the choice of methodology (see Ragsdell 1995).

⁴ I use 'means of intervention' rather than the confusing label of 'methodology' which Flood and Jackson use; which also avoids the naive claim that TSI is a "meta-methodology" (*ibid.*, p322). TSI considers five 'means of intervention': Operational Research, Cybernetics, Strategic Assumption Surfacing and Testing, Soft Systems Methodology, and Critical Systems Heuristics (*ibid.*, p328).

The exploration of an organisation uses a select number of metaphors, from Morgan's (1986) list, to determine the dominant metaphor(s) of that organisation. The dominant metaphor can then be matched with a means of intervention: as metaphors are assumed to underlie these interventions (1991a, p326). Metaphors underlying the means of intervention extends the argument that metaphors underlie theory (cf. Chapter 2). Assumptions are also made about the context, whether it is: simple or complex; and unitary or pluralist or coercive. An example of this *choice* phase is as follows: if the dominant metaphor of an organisation is an *organism*, and the problem context is complex and pluralist, then Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) would be an appropriate means of intervening (1991a, p328).

TSI's use of metaphors emphasises convergence on dominant metaphors. An allowance is made that there are associated metaphors, called 'dependent' metaphors. These dependent metaphors are metaphors that might be "*sensible to pursue in the next phase*" (*ibid.*, p326), that is another means of intervening can be chosen to provide an iteration. I pursue *dominant* metaphors further in Chapter 10.

A number of aspects are concealed by TSI:

- only a select number of metaphors are used;
- these metaphors are presented in a limiting way⁵;
- there does not seem any scope to generate other metaphors; and
- staff in the organisation do not seem to play any part in the selection of metaphors and interventions.

The last two aspects are particularly limiting in the context of my research.

⁵ Flood and Jackson (1991a) impose possible interpretations on these metaphors, as shown by the following quote: "...rather than pose questions such as 'is the organisation like, or ought it be like a machine?', we would consider issues of hierarchy, division of labour, standardised parts, non-adaptability, etc..." (*ibid.*, p334).

8.2.3 USES IN FAMILY THERAPY

A quite different way that metaphors have been used is in areas such as family therapy. Combs and Freedman (1990: 44) propose that metaphors can facilitate six processes:

- developing a relationship;
- gathering information;
- accessing and utilising resources;
- suggesting ideas;
- reframing; and
- facilitating new patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviour.

The first of these processes, developing relationships, is also an important part of this thesis. Cooper (1986: 140) claims that using metaphors "*effects a familiarity or 'intimacy'... (and) helps to make people 'at home' "*. I discussed earlier how bringing forth metaphors can contribute to relationship building (see Chapter 4). Gathering information and accessing resources, Combs and Freedman's next two uses of metaphors, appear as crude approximations to processes involved in story-telling, but with connotations of "knowledge elicitation"⁶. The last three processes listed by Combs and Freedman appear similar to the use of metaphors in creativity and problem solving. Reframing in family therapy is seen in terms of *enabling different stories to be told (ibid.)*. An explicit use of metaphors to develop relationships adds support for the methods that I chose. However, *if* the relationship between people in family therapy is seen in terms of a therapist-client relationship, then that might work against attempts to research *with* people. There seems enough evidence though that the position of the therapist is more of an issue in family therapy than in agriculture, so these concerns are probably unfounded (cf. Bateson 1972; Goolishian and Winderman 1988; Humphreys 1990).

⁶ Behrooz and Marshall (1993), although not family therapists, use an assumption that experts codify their expertise via metaphors, hence knowledge elicitation and metaphors were linked. Knowledge elicitation is developed in Stephens and Gammack (1994). Knowledge elicitation follows certain assumptions about 'knowledge' and also 'research' which can best be contrasted with Waters-Bayer's (1994) distinction between 'extractive' and 'enriching' research. The use of metaphors in knowledge elicitation is not pursued.

One method that implicitly uses metaphors is outlined by Boscolo *et al.* (1995). The method focuses on keywords: which are words that can "*evoke clearly defined emotional states*"; and have "*potential to bring about change*" (*ibid.*, p57). These keywords "*embrace*" metaphors (p58). The therapists use the keywords in much the same way as both reframing and creativity, as the keywords: "*operate by connotation... the richer the connotations, the more useful [they are]...*" (p59). Two considerations that flow from this method are: 'who chooses the keywords?' and 'when can keywords be used?'. In this case, the therapists "*chooses words and metaphors that seem appropriate to language of clients*" (p62), which contrasts with "bringing forth metaphors". As keywords can have a "*positive or negative effect on relationships*", there must be a "*positive attitude to the system as constituted as a pre-condition for the use of keywords*" (p62-3). One implication is that it is necessary to build relationships in order to use a method such as this; which contrasts with the espoused use of metaphors to *facilitate* building relationships. The keyword method stresses, however, the importance of giving space to keywords rather than trying to change behaviour. Overall, the term "keywords" is less daunting than the more "academic" term of "metaphor". **If** keywords and metaphors are as similar as implied by Boscolo *et al.* (1995), there could be practical advantages to using the former term, for example, during project descriptions, introductions, and other scenarios encountered during fieldwork.

8.3.4 APPROACHES IN AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSE STAKEHOLDER CONTEXTS

Very few research approaches in these diverse stakeholder contexts explicitly use or refer to metaphors. One approach that does refer to metaphors explicitly is 'Rapid (or Relaxed) Appraisal of Agricultural Knowledge Systems' (RAAKS- see Engel 1995). This approach also provides a valuable bridge between Rural Development and research in "developed countries". A host of approaches *potentially* use metaphors implicitly when they use techniques such as diagrams, maps and imagery to enhance 'participation'. I choose one approach from Rural Development to explore this implicit use of metaphors: Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). I say 'potential' to distinguish between approaches that do or do not take into account multiple metaphors, whether they refer to metaphors directly or not. I also explore whether two approaches concerned with developing a vision of UK countryside implicitly use metaphors or not. Each of these four approaches reveal and conceal different

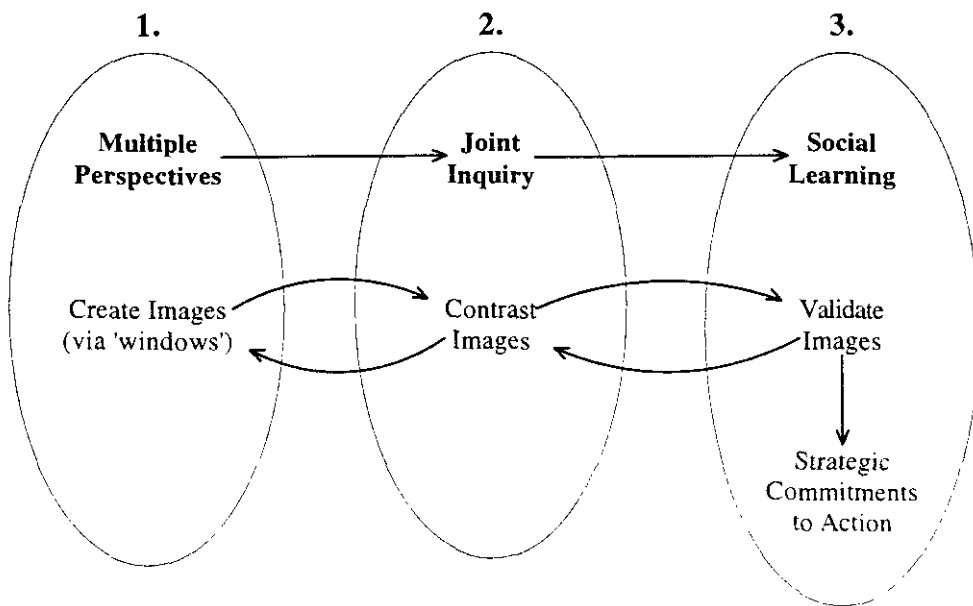
aspects of using metaphors, and each contribute to an understanding of how metaphors can be used in research.

Engel (1995) explores "the social organisation of innovation", and proposes RAAKS as a "...soft systems methodology⁷ to enable stakeholders to engage in meaningful discourse about the social organisation of innovation and to design measures to improve it" (*ibid.*, p263). RAAKS is used in over 50 case studies, both in developed and developing countries. "The images that RAAKS helps create", he writes, "emphasise social interaction between social actors from different relevant practices and help stimulate debate and reflection" (p263). RAAKS uses different analytical "windows", in interviews and workshop discussions, to create images (p197). The windows represent different analytical perspectives, with inclusive 'tools' for gathering and organising "relevant information" (p189). The created images are then contrasted, and "validated" (p245), as an iterative process, again in workshop situations. Engel proposes that social learning and innovation can occur through this process of creating, contrasting and validating images (see p245), as the learning process is being discussed rather than the 'problem' *per se* (P. Engel, Wageningen Agricultural University, 1995, pers. comm.). A simplified schema of how RAAKS uses images, and hence metaphors, is presented in Figure 8.2.

An interesting feature of RAAKS is the emphasis on a process of generating images, via considering multiple perspectives and different windows. Generating images in this way is much more structured than considering 'emergent images' from the methods that I chose. Engel does not explain how the images are contrasted in RAAKS, apart from a loose reference to "workshop discussions" (see p245). Validation of images, which appears to refer to 'convergence' and 'acceptability', occurs in the social learning that surrounds discussions. That images must converge, in order for social learning to occur, appears a weakness in the formulation. One possible justification for this, is that Engel thought that convergence was necessary for co-ordinated action⁸.

⁷ Or also as a "participatory action-research methodology" (*ibid.*, p189). The title RAAKS reflects the impact of 'Rapid Rural Appraisal' (RRA) and 'Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems' (AKIS) on its development.

⁸ Engel leaves his formulation at "strategic commitments" to action and "decision to follow-up" (1995: 245).



Modified from Engels (1995: 245)

Figure 8.2 RAAKS' use of images and metaphors

Convergence on a select number of images (usually one) appears to underlie most work using metaphors, even Morgan's *Imaginization*. Convergence conceals the 'celebration of diversity' underpinning this research, and also the attempts to create space for different metaphors to emerge. Alternatively, a desire to converge may be recognising that:

- we can only deal with a certain 'quantity' of images before there is overload;
- if everybody 'does their own thing' then it can hardly be called 'co-ordinated action' (and the subsequent consequences for institutions); and
- we can only consider a certain number (or type) of design implications.

RAAKS explicitly considers images and metaphors (again, these terms are used interchangeably). The next three approaches do not consider metaphors explicitly, although they may consider metaphors implicitly. Diagrams and pictures can be considered as graphical metaphors as they express different understandings and trigger different understandings than verbal responses. This implies that any technique or approach that uses diagrams in diverse stakeholder contexts can be considered in this section. However, I propose that an approach implicitly uses metaphors when it pays attention to questions of *participation*, who 'draws the picture?', and to 'who interprets and uses the pictures?'

I choose PRA approaches as examples of how metaphors can be used implicitly in research. Cornwall *et al.* (1994) describe and reflect on the use of PRA, since its emergence in the early 1990's. In contrast to the extractive nature of the Rapid Rural Appraisals (RRA), PRA approaches stress a 'participative' orientation to the inquiry, and that: "*the production of knowledge and the generation of potential solutions should be carried out by those whose livelihood strategies formed the subject for research*" (*ibid.*, 108). Stakeholders, therefore, are defined in terms of livelihoods. People involved in the PRA inquiry become "*creative analysts and performers, rather than reactive respondents*" (*ibid.*, p108). PRA has also been used in a developed country context (Inglis 1992; Webber and Ison 1995).

PRA is associated with a suite of methods, designed to enhance this inquiry (Cornwall *et al.* 1994: 109, Box 2)⁹. These authors are concerned with questions as to who constructs and interprets the diagrams. Therefore I claim that (this formulation of) PRA implicitly uses metaphors. Cornwall *et al.* (1994: 108) raise a further point: diagrams "*facilitate further discussion, but do not replace dialogue*". If diagramming is considered a 'tool to aid dialogue' (see Kersten 1995), then that implies that metaphors can also be considered as a tool for dialogue. This indicates a very important 'use' of metaphors: to facilitate dialogue. I explore this in the next section.

Two approaches incorporate images and a focus on UK countrysides. Both concern 'visioning', or developing a vision, of future landscapes. Visions can

⁹ Webber and Ison (1995) call into question whether the methods can enhance inquiry, by examining the limitations of assumptions of 'community', 'participation', learning experience', and 'evaluation' as espoused by PRA proponents.

be seen as extended metaphors, or developed images. Visioning is not restricted to the plausible and involves: "*taking off all the constraints of assumed 'feasibility', (and) of disbelief...*" (O'Riordan *et al.* 1993: 123).

Landscapes for Tomorrow uses images to create public awareness, involvement and a desire for action with landscapes (O'Riordan *et al.* 1993). As such, it attempted to extend principles of *interpretation*: that by an act of interpretation, an understanding, appreciation and desire to protect landscapes can be fostered (*ibid.*, p128). Eight possible landscape types in the Yorkshire Dales, UK, were selected after interviews with "*key players in the policy process*" (p134)¹⁰. These landscapes were: "*imaged in the form of water colour paintings, then incorporated [into a larger display]*"¹¹... (p123, emphasis added). This display was taken around different locations as a 'road show', and a selection of people visiting the display were also interviewed.

Attempting to create awareness and a desire for action, consolidates a suggestion that metaphors may be used in a process of change. The authors of the study did not intend any of the paintings to become *the* vision of a landscape, though that seems to be what they were asking people to respond to. The study lacks any substantial reflection on the process, and completely ignores people's own images¹². However, embodying images into paintings seems innovative and reveals different media for research using metaphors (see Figure 4.1: sources of metaphors).

A second example of *visioning* is less innovative, and I suggest does not use metaphors as they pertain to this research. The Countryside Commission (CoCo) proposes to develop a vision of the future landscape in the UK¹³. It

¹⁰ These were: today's landscape (baseline), abandoned, semi-intensive, intensive, planned, conserved, leisure, and wild.

¹¹ This display also included a "*video programme, a carefully worded leaflet, a 12m by 9m floor game, and the assistance of interpretive staff*" (p130). The landscape types also included "*estimated costings*" and who pays (government, private or visitor), as "*the choice of landscape should be influenced by cost*" (p136). Whilst these additions to the paintings were intended to aid the interpretive project, they are contentious and it raises issues of 'imposing images'.

¹² Which could be considered outside the scope of their study, except that the authors admit that it is easy to create an image, but more difficult to "*prepare the justification of why that future state is possible, what can be done to promote it or avoid it, and to provide such an experience for those whose futures are at stake*" (p124).

¹³ "Conserving the Landscape of the Eastern Region", conference at Ely, 11/4/95. Most comments relate to Tim De-Keyzer's address "Developing a vision for the landscape: a proposal" (Senior Countryside Officer, CoCo).

was argued that a vision is not a blueprint, but rather a framework that could guide the direction of change. A vision is needed so that a strategy and action plan could be drawn up. It is proposed that the vision would emerge from the "Countryside Character Programme" of the CoCo, that aims to map and describe the landscape types found in England (although the vision would arise from a consensus of 'partners', who needed to be identified). Although this process to 'vision' is just a proposal, and the aim is to invite comments on how this could be done, it conceals a number of aspects:

- it involves a linear vision-strategy-action formulation, which does not seem relevant;
- it conceals a diversity of possible images, and again, imposes one image onto a group of people. Any potential benefits for images to help "articulate" visions would then be lost;
- it concentrates on a particular vision, rather than a process of visioning; and
- it appears as trying to make use of 'regional character maps and analysis', rather than an attempt to contribute to possible future landscapes.

Of these points, the most disabling aspects are the concealment of a diversity of images and a convergence on one single image. I claim that CoCo's visioning approach did not acknowledge metaphors or question how people can be involved.

Two aspects are revealed by both PRA and visioning approaches. The first is that 'using metaphors' raises questions of context, process, and a 'way of thinking using metaphors', rather than individual metaphors *per se*. The second aspect is that the explicit use of the word 'metaphor' indeed is not essential for metaphors to inform process design. Although I have discussed 'metaphor of metaphor', and the use of alternative words such as images, keywords and visions, graphical approaches can be quite powerful.

8.3 Metaphors facilitating dialogue, and creating a space for understandings to emerge

All of the approaches that explicitly use metaphors also discuss how metaphors give a potential for understandings to emerge. Some approaches, such as in Family Therapy and in RAAKS, explicitly consider *facilitating* understandings through *creating a space*. These approaches inspire efforts to appreciate, and create, a diversity of understandings by explicitly using metaphors. Here, I am

interested in *jointly* bringing forth and exploring metaphors in order to create a space where understandings can emerge, and in shifting from a researcher-narrator to a researcher-facilitator (Chapter 3). Kersten's (1995) work on *dialogue* enhances these efforts.

Kersten (1995) proposes that creating a 'dynamic' dialogue on vegetation management in western NSW, Australia, is a positive alternative to the traditional 'static' debate on whether these rangelands had been degraded or not. This debate between researchers, advisers and pastoralists, which goes back 100 years, shows polarised views and cycles of blame and counter-blame. Those involved in the debate did not appear to appreciate the 'multiple realities' of the different actors. Kersten proposes that moving from 'degradation' to 'vegetation management' was a way of breaking this debate, with the various actors becoming *partners* in managing the rangelands. She emphasises an approach to create a non-threatening environment where *different* perspectives could be listened to and respected, and proposes factors that enhance or inhibit this process. A non-threatening environment is seen to include open invitations to participate and relationship building. One alternative metaphor of countryside that I proposed, countryside-as-networks of conversation, is largely based on Kersten's research and the authors that she draws from.

Isaacs (1993: 25) describes how: "...the word *dialogue* comes from two Greek roots, 'dia' and 'logos', suggesting 'meaning flowing through'." Isaacs suggests an initial working definition of "... a sustained collective inquiry in: o the processes, assumptions, and certainties that compose everyday experience". This then "...allows new possibilities to emerge" (*ibid.*, p26). Buber refers to dialogue as "*mutual unveiling*" (1965, cited in Moustakas 1990). If dialogue is contrasted with debate, which etymologically means *to beat down*, then a different ethic arises from which to consider research. Debate implies that one understanding takes priority over another, and that present understandings need to be defended. Dialogue implies that differences in understanding can be explored.

Roth *et al.* (1992) demonstrate what dialogue might look like in practice when they consider the issue of 'abortion', traditionally characterised in terms of polarised views. These authors did not look at 'consensus' building, but rather at how different views, and the assumptions that underlie them, can be

discussed and appreciated. Their facilitative role is to: "*create a structure and manage a process that allows the participants to safely and productively explore the content*" (*ibid.*, p43). During meetings, these authors propose to participants that they are unlikely to change other people's minds, so not to try to do so during the meeting. The authors set up some ground rules to structure the meeting, in order to create the non-threatening environment for dialogue to emerge. The work of Roth *et al.* gave Kersten a means by which she could approach the degradation debate experienced in her research context.

Kersten (1995) explores a link between understandings (or 'meaning') and dialogue, and how dialogue can trigger the emergence of different understandings (see also McClintock and Ison 1994a, b). In Chapter 2, I discussed a hermeneutic relationship between metaphors and understanding: that metaphors structure, and are revealed by, understandings (Figure 2.2c). To this I add that metaphors can also be concealed by our understandings. *If I assume that different metaphors are brought forth and discussed through language, then I have a means to explicitly link metaphors, dialogue and understanding (Figure 8.3; McClintock et al. 1997).*

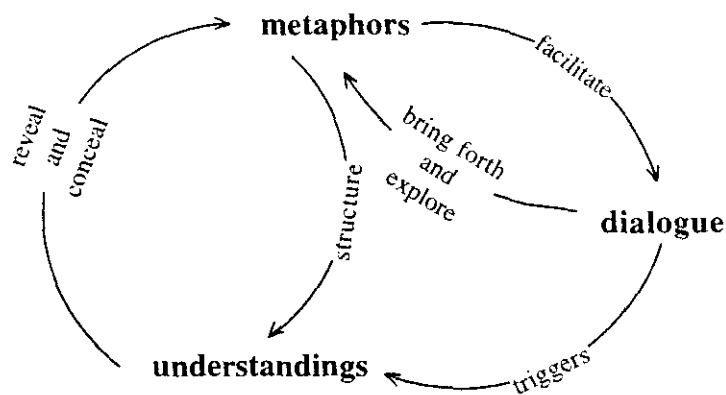


Figure 8.3 Proposed relationships between metaphors, understandings and dialogue

I propose that considering metaphors explicitly can facilitate a dialogue about the research context, which can then trigger different understandings. This proposal underpins my efforts to jointly bring forth and explore metaphors, in contrast to my use of metaphors in previous chapters of a researcher gaining an understanding of the research context.

I outline two 'metaphor workshops' in the next chapter, and efforts to jointly bring forth and explore metaphors. By doing so, I am also 'testing' whether Figure 8.3 can be supported or not. Relationships between metaphors and understandings seem well supported via my analysis to date. Kersten (1995) gives support for the relationship between dialogue and understandings. One relationship stands out as not being supported, that between metaphors and dialogue. I show how the 'metaphor workshops' can support this relationship. A dialogue about metaphors includes both distinctions around metaphors, as in Chapters 2 and 4, *as well as* particular metaphors of a research context.

Morgan (1993) implicitly raises a distinction between *emergent* and *proposed* metaphors, that can inform attempts to facilitate a dialogue by the use of metaphors¹⁴. Emergent metaphors are: "*metaphors of the moment that emerge spontaneously during the course of discussion and inquiry*" (1993: 175). These metaphors: "*...offer 'inside theories' about what is happening and what needs to be done. They can often have a much greater impact on management and change processes than more abstract academic theories, and they should be mobilised whenever possible*" (*ibid.*, p175). Emergent metaphors help staff to "*create a coherent story of 'where they've been and where they're going'...*" (*ibid.*, p175), thus demonstrating the personal empowerment role that Morgan envisions. However, if there are no metaphors of the moment, then Morgan uses *proposed* metaphors "*as a way of creating dialogue*" (*ibid.*, p173). Proposed metaphors can easily be in the form of pictures, such as a picture of a yoghurt container (and the question of 'what if you consider your organisation as yoghurt?').

¹⁴ I have not attempted to use Morgan's work as *direct* support that a dialogue can be created, because he seems more interested in producing "*an evolving reading of the situation*" which can be "*confirm(ed), refute(d) and reformulate(d)*" (1993: 301), rather than exploring differences in understanding through a joint inquiry. My interpretation of Morgan's use of 'dialogue' is as an alternative word to 'discussion', or talk together, which misses the richness found in Roth *et al.* (1992), Isaacs (1993), and Kersten (1995).

When metaphors are proposed or "*introduced from the outside*", Morgan saw that it was "*crucial that people be encouraged to find and elaborate meanings for themselves*" (*ibid.*, p290). A distinction between emergent and proposed metaphors implies that proposing new metaphors alone may not be enough to trigger new understandings. This comes close to a separate point that "*metaphors only have an impact when they 'ring true', 'hit a chord' and 'resonate' around fundamental insights*" (p290). Therefore, once again, attention moves away from individual metaphors to a *process* of creating space for considering metaphors. I explore whether emergent and proposed metaphors can facilitate dialogue, during the metaphor workshops.

8.4 Reflections on Chapter 8

I find the thought of jointly bringing forth and exploring metaphors much more exciting than concentrating on my own understanding of a research context, as in previous chapters, although I recognise both as being part of researching *with* people. I also prefer the thought of my judgements becoming part of a process and part of interactions rather than as part of a research document, as in previous chapters. In some ways, the balance of the thesis is not indicative of my enthusiasms, because I devoted four chapters to my understanding of the research context, and only two chapters to creating a space for understandings to emerge (this chapter and the next). The amount of material available was one factor in the relative lengths of the responses to the thesis question, as was my perceived need to demonstrate bringing forth and the framework for exploring metaphors in a rigorous way. A further reason for devoting four chapters to my understanding of the research context is that two of these refer to the 'windows' of farming and FWAG, and these are consistent with another part of researching *with* people: respecting and valuing their day-to-day activities.

In this chapter, I outlined several uses of metaphors in research, although I am sure the literature in 'other' domains utilises further ways of using metaphors. In agriculture, the reference to 'using metaphors' is rare, although some writers include off-hand references to a *particular* metaphor to emphasise a certain point. I have not attempted to cover the broad literature on story-telling, especially in a Rural Development context, although my analysis in Chapter 4 indicates story-telling hinges around the use of metaphors. Paying attention to further uses of metaphors in other domains, is outside of the scope of this thesis; although I suggest that it is a worthy issue for further research. Each

approach that I did consider, reveals and conceals different aspects pertinent to researching *with* people, and each approach has informed my formulation of using metaphors to facilitate dialogue.

In footnote 14, I mentioned an issue that is worthy of further discussion. Gareth Morgan's work inspires a lot of what I do and say. However, I claimed that he did not explicitly address processes of 'dialogue' when he considered exploring metaphors, largely on the basis of the appendix of Imaginization on research methods. However, he considers issues around not imposing meaning, group discussions and looking for alternative metaphors. In addition, some of the other authors quoted in this chapter consider workshops and experiential learning, which can be considered *implicit* uses of dialogue. I am left with a sense of unease that I am making 'dialogue' too formalised, and that I am not considering other *metaphors* to describe a process of structuring, appreciating, and learning from each other's experiences. For example, Russell and Ison (1993) use *conversation* to describe a process of 'turning with'. This is a more 'everyday' concept than dialogue, and the effects of a 'good' conversation are probably the same as 'a dialogue' in terms of possible emergent understandings. Part of the effectiveness of using 'dialogue' comes from a contrast with 'debate', the latter I can describe in terms of trying to convince other people that your particular metaphor is correct. Because of this contrast, I find dialogue a useful way to approach structuring the 'metaphor workshops'. I also use 'dialogue' as it encourages further reflection on the roles of the researcher, and hence enhances efforts to research *with* people.

Chapter 9 Metaphor workshops: facilitating dialogue on future countrysides through metaphors

Metaphors provide ways of creating space for understandings to emerge

In this chapter, I outline two 'metaphor workshops' designed to support my claim that metaphors can facilitate dialogue through being jointly brought forth and explored. If my claim is appropriate, then an awareness of metaphors *can* provide ways of creating space for understandings to emerge; which is my fourth response to the thesis question. I chose workshops as being a suitable method for a joint exploration, because the emphasis is on exploring content and process in an experiential manner *with* a group of people. One workshop was held with FWAG advisers, and the second with farming families. I refer to these workshops as Workshops 5 and 6 respectively, to acknowledge four previous workshops conducted during this research (see Chapter 4 for details of these previous workshops).

I describe four aspects of the workshops:

- how they were designed;
- what metaphors and understandings emerged;
- what aspects were revealed and concealed by the workshops; and
- questions arising from the workshop designs.

I have incorporated most of the 'content' pertaining to countrysides, farming and FWAG into previous chapters, and do not repeat it here. I indicate which metaphors were jointly brought forth, and present in Appendix 4 some figures that contrast the discussions in the two workshops.

9.1 Workshop designs

I designed the workshops to investigate whether metaphors could be jointly brought forth and explored, what these metaphors were, and whether I could call this joint exploration a 'dialogue'.

On the basis of Kersten's (1995) dialogue meetings, I would call a dialogue:

- a process *designed* to take into account different understandings and how to explore them in a non-threatening environment;
- a free-flowing discussion that does not 'fall flat';
- an active and open participation in activities and discussions;
- a consideration of alternative views (with respect);
- where participants indicate 'getting something out of it', both during and after the workshop;
- where people are not alienated or defensive of their positions; and
- where different relationships between people lead to different ways of working.

The last point is, of course, nearly impossible to ascertain. Whilst it would be a strong indication that a workshop created a space for different understandings, it cannot be interpreted instrumentally. I have outlined a position that sees understandings as only being able to be triggered. If they are not triggered, then that is not necessarily a failure of the process *per se*. I can also conceive of situations where a few of the factors are met, but not all, or where a few people indicate getting something out of it but others feel defensive.

Judgements as to whether a process is a dialogue or not are not absolute, and the factors are mainly intended as a way to reflect on what is involved in 'creating a space' for understandings to emerge.

The workshops were designed to be either one-off events or to contribute to a longer term process. The advantages of a longer-term process are that iteration is possible and metaphors and understandings can in turn feed into a process of exploring the research context. Further, longer term experiences may be necessary before distinctions around metaphors become meaningful, and a series of workshops opens opportunities for people to be involved who cannot attend on one particular day. However, based on my experiences with Workshops 1 and 2 in Buckinghamshire, I anticipated that the workshops might not lead to further research action; which indeed they did not.

One workshop was held with FWAG advisers and one with farming families: an institutional and diverse stakeholder context. This provided some site for reflection on jointly bringing forth metaphors in different contexts: although the effect was diminished somewhat because the FWAG advisers came as

individuals in their own time, rather than as FWAG 'representatives'. The aims of the workshops were similar for each, although the designs differed as:

- the amount of travel involved differed;
- less time was available for the workshop with the farming families;
- the processes leading up to the workshops were different; and
- FWAG advisers' work involves working with groups of people, and an awareness of metaphors might be useful in their everyday activities. I am not implying that farmers can not use metaphors, just that this was not a part of design for their workshop.

The main design features of the two workshops are shown in Table 9.1. Most of the differences between the workshops, in terms of logistics, concerned 'what is convenient' to potential participants in terms of times and locations. For FWAG advisers, a Saturday workshop did not interfere with FWAG 'duties' too much and participation was motivated by interest rather than because they were paid. As the advisers were county-based, the Open University campus was perhaps as central a location as any in terms of travelling distances. Farming families contacted in this phase of research were geographically close, and a workshop closer to them was more convenient. One of the farmers offered the use of a farm office. The other differences in design largely arise because of different processes leading up to the workshops.

Table 9.1 Design features and logistics for the metaphor workshops

Design feature	Workshop Five (W5) FWAG advisers	Workshop Six (W6) farming families
time	Saturday, all day including lunch	Week-day, 1 morning, 3 hours plus lunch
location	OU campus, Milton Keynes	farmer's office, Bedfordshire
number of participants	5 advisers (5 male)	6 farmers (4 male, 2 female)
invitation	formal, by letter	informal, personal contact
pre-workshop contact	minimal: letter and telephone (excepting advisers involved in previous phases of the research)	visits and a day working on the farm (PO)
average distance travelled by participants	higher, average 30 miles	low, average 5 miles
feedback from this author	includes 'design' considerations; diagrams	includes extensive use of cartoons and 'trigger' questions

In the following sections I elaborate on three parts of the workshop design:

- processes leading up to the workshops;
- creating a structure through distinctions and ground rules; and
- activities for jointly bringing forth and exploring metaphors.

9.1.1 PROCESSES LEADING UP TO THE WORKSHOPS

Two important questions, often neglected in reports on workshops, are 'who is invited?' and 'how are they invited?'. In this section I answer these two questions.

Workshop 5: FWAG advisers

During previous phases of participant-observation, interviewing and workshops, I had made contact with 12 county-based FWAG advisers. A possibility to be involved in a national training event, to jointly explore 'FWAG's ways of working', did not eventuate. This meant that I could not draw on institutional support, and that I could not ask advisers to be involved as a part of their work.

I wrote to all 44 county-based FWAG advisers in England, outlining my research, and inviting them to a workshop to explore 'how future countrysides can come about' (see Appendix 2). I did not expect those advisers located too far away to be able, or willing, to participate, but inviting all of the advisers could involve a greater diversity of people than if I just invited the 12 already contacted. Five advisers accepted the invitation to participate, two of these had been involved quite substantially during earlier phases. I wrote again to these advisers and enclosed a suggested program and some preparatory questions, the latter designed to stimulate evaluation as an ongoing part of the workshop¹.

Workshop 6: farming families

The farming families who were invited to participate in W6 arose through contacts with one family based near St. Neots in Cambridgeshire². This family had been involved in a previous phase of the research, the nutrient balancing

¹ These questions were: what prompted you to come to this workshop; what do you hope to get out of it; and how will you decide whether it has been worthwhile? The program is presented in Appendix 3.

² The property boundary also went into Bedfordshire, and some of the subsequent contacts were based in Bedfordshire, but within a 5-10 mile radius.

project (see Chapter 4). I approached six families, one declined to be involved. Numbers were quite important: too many people provided logistical constraints, and the aim was to explore process issues rather than appeal to 'representation' of a farming community. The five farming families gave 14 people, including one farm worker involved in decision making³.

I asked each family whether I could spend a day working on the farm and speak with as many family members about farming and countrysides as possible. These conversations were taped, transcribed and analysed for metaphors. The time of participant-observation was designed to contribute to relationships, seek a suitable time and venue for a workshop, as well as to bring forth metaphors.

In contrast to the formal invitation by letter to FWAG advisers, farming families were invited informally through face-to-face conversations. The time and venue were also 'negotiated' rather than being set in advance by me. The best compromise was a morning workshop, at one of the farmer's offices, in which six farmers participated. Three hours seemed to be the most time that people were willing to commit, especially as any time at a workshop can represent an opportunity cost in terms of time away from farm activities.

9.1.2 CREATING A STRUCTURE: DISTINCTIONS AND GROUND RULES

I considered that several distinctions and ground rules were necessary in order to create a structure where metaphors could be jointly brought forth and explored. I assumed that an ability to make a distinction was necessary before somebody can identify an experience (Maturana 1988), and that experiences were a necessary component of experiential learning (Kolb 1984). Ground rules provide a structure for how people might interact with each other, and are considered important to create a dialogue rather than a debate (Roth *et al.* 1992; Isaacs 1993; Kersten 1995). Kersten (1995) suggests that the word 'rules' is too formal, and that extending an 'invitation to share experiences' is more satisfying.

³ Although this worker was not invited to the workshop- almost implicitly because he was to stay at home whilst the owner came. This is perhaps a flaw in the process leading to workshops.

I proposed five distinctions and ground-rules in the form of flip-chart posters and visual images, and I used the same posters for both workshops. These distinctions interlink (Figure 9.1), and the rationale for each was:

- *to consider that there is "no right or wrong" in the workshop.* Judging something to be 'correct' excludes other possibilities, and leads to alienating people that do not have 'the correct view'. In a practical sense, having a right or wrong can constrain discussion and lead to 'non-involvement'. Giving up a claim to know the right way, in terms of countrysides, allows opportunities to learn why people have different perspectives, and indeed create a space where people can learn about their own perspectives and those held by other people. It also means that instead of trying to get to one answer, diversity can be appreciated;
- *'future countrysides' can never be just one thing, and hence it is important to look at different views.* Some further questions this poster posed were: 'are countrysides a 'thing' at all'; 'what do we mean by countrysides'; 'how do they come about'; and 'who is involved'?
- *traps are limitations to certain ways of understanding, and that problems arise because of our ways of understanding.* Looking for different ways of thinking may 'break' these traps. Hence, rather than 'solve problems' it might be more accurate to say our understandings change and the problem dis-solves. The concept of traps is used in Systems courses at The Open University, to indicate that a different way of thinking (namely, systems) is being taught. In practice, the distinction of traps probably indicates a request to "not dismiss what follows just because it is different";
- *metaphors are one way to change ways of understanding.* The key points on the poster were that: metaphors are numerous, they are partial and co-exist, and that they have implications (i.e., ideas and actions that follow from thinking in a certain way). I acknowledged that metaphors are an academic term, and suggested related notions such as images, perspectives, points of view, ways of describing. I used an example of "this room is a prison" to illustrate metaphors and these distinctions; and
- *'researching with people' is different from researching on things, or on people.* The poster emphasised research aims of fostering understandings and learning together, rather than to conduct research to be then passed on to people so they can implement it.

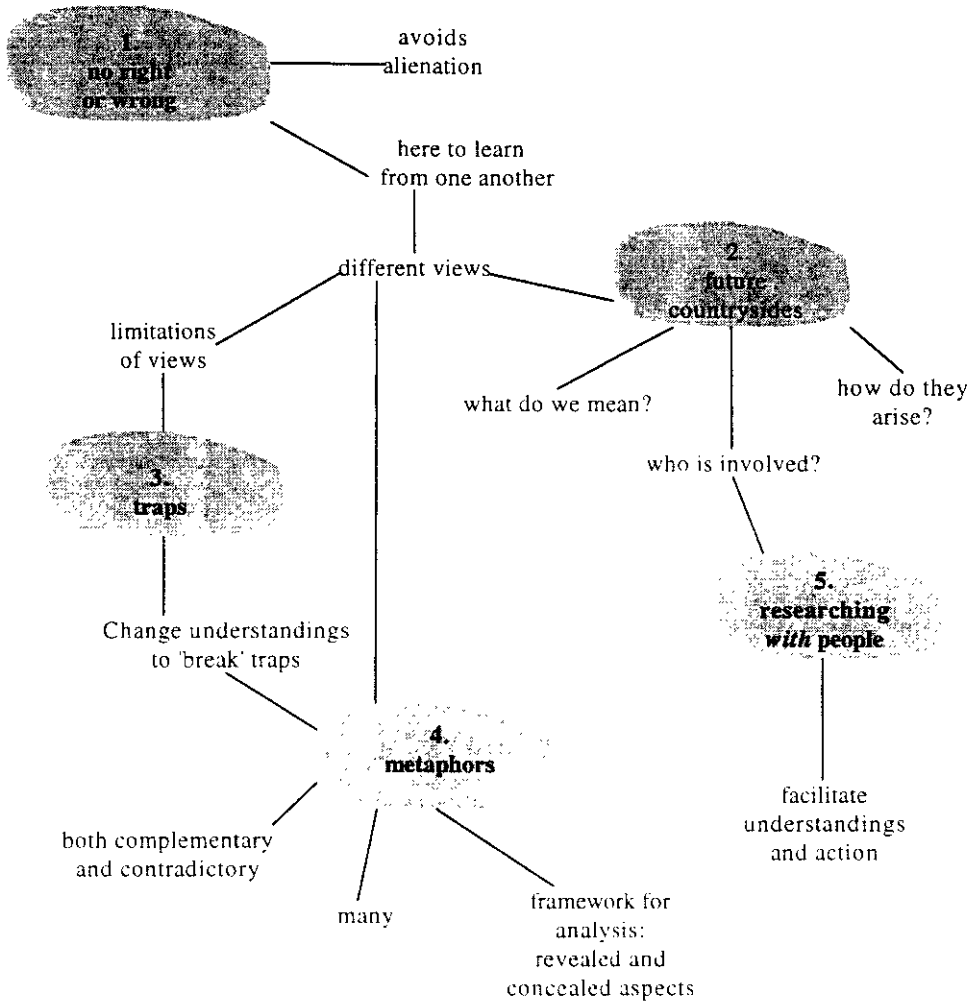


Figure 9.1 Distinctions used in the metaphor workshops

The distinctions and ground rules can create a structure, and alert participants to what sorts of experiences might be relevant. The next aspect of design concerns the activities chosen in order to jointly bring forth and explore metaphors.

9.1.3 WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

Activities are the 'doing' parts of a workshop, and give opportunities to learn by experience. How activities are chosen is an important design consideration. I did not consider activities as normative tools that can be used to manipulate response. Choosing activities is a way of anticipating possibilities, and allowing for the many contingencies that can, and do, arise during a workshop. I describe five phases of workshop activities both in terms of what I did for the two workshops and why I consider these phases to be important:

- arrival;
- social and informal times;
- introductions and distinctions;
- evaluation; and
- main activities.

Arrival represents a chance for participants to switch modes after perhaps a stressful journey. I have found refreshments and a space where people can chat informally to be essential. Relationships between people are the key thing to consider in this phase, as many gatherings are worthwhile in the sense that people have a chance to chat and meet others. 'Arrival' also caters for people who come late. Posters on the wall seem desirable, as do photographs, so that people have something to look at, and if they don't know anybody, they can easily talk about a non-threatening aspect of a poster. I presented the distinctions as posters, and displayed them so that people could see them on arrival. I also presented some other posters: a cartoon based on some fieldwork photographs which invited people to suggest a caption and, for W5, a poster titled "a day at FWAG". This latter poster invited people to write up a few points about what they do each day. This poster was intended to feed into later activities.

Social and informal times during the workshop are also very important. My experience of most workshops is that these times are usually ignored, and the program is crammed full of events. These times are an important part of

'reflection'. I suggest that opportunities to walk can both enhance these social times and provide an opportunity to 'experience' aspects relating to countrysides. What is talked about when walking, with 'prompts and triggers', can also be substantially different from the what is talked about when sitting in a room. Farm walks are a common FWAG activity, for these reasons.

With respect to catering for the metaphor workshops, for W5, I provided soup and sandwiches, whereas in W6, I took the farmers to a local pub for a light meal. Whilst the former is cheaper, the pub lunch requires less administration and is also quite a nice atmosphere. The main reason for not providing sandwiches for W6 was that the farmer did not think this was appropriate in the farm office. Tea, coffee and biscuits are also provided.

Introductions are often badly handled, and I find the traditional 'going around a circle, and people saying their name, and where they come from' boring and uninformative. The main contingency with introductions is how well group members know each other. A warm-up and gelling time is usually needed as even people that knew each other quite well rarely have worked with one another in a group. However, if people are reasonably familiar with each other, a short activity to say, 'hey, we're going to work with each other today' is sufficient. Splitting off into pairs and spending a short period of time with one person is a non-threatening alternative to a large group introduction. I have in previous workshops tried an introductory activity based on metaphors, which can be considered risky⁴. If the safety of a traditional introduction is desired, then combining it with a 'what do you want to get to get out of today' stimulates reflection. The distinctions proposed by the facilitator can often be quite quickly covered, by drawing attention to the posters around the wall⁵. Giving participants opportunities to modify the 'proposed programme' in terms of their needs is also important.

Evaluation is an on-going activity and an essential part of learning. Too often it is left until the end of a workshop. Activities should be evaluated before

⁴ A previous workshop tried an introductory activity based on describing the theme of the workshop (in this case, 'set-aside') in terms of a particular metaphor, such as 'fishing'. This activity was not used because the participants knew each other fairly well, and other activities could introduce distinctions around metaphors.

⁵ Later I reflect on whether this is sufficient to identify with statements such as 'there's no right or wrong', and I suggest that some sort of role play might be needed so that the distinctions themselves can be experienced.

moving on to the next one. I provided notebooks for participants to jot down any notes during the workshop. The preparatory questions to the FWAG advisers can also provide criteria for which to judge the workshop. Specific preparatory questions were not given to the farmers, as this function was included in the participant-observation, although there could have been some benefits from doing so. FWAG advisers also considered an extra question linked to evaluation: 'how could we use metaphors in what we do?' (in our day-to-day activities). I posed this question as an alternative to a typical *closed* evaluative question of 'what did you think of today?'. It is closed in the sense that the frame of reference is what is discussed in the workshop, rather than daily experience.

Evaluation also includes feedback to participants, to trigger further thoughts and exploration. Workshops were taped and transcribed, and flip-chart posters were 'collapsed' onto A4 sheets. These then formed the basis of preparing feedback. Feedback to the FWAG advisers included details of the workshop design, as they asked for this. Feedback to the farmers included a wide use of cartoons and trigger questions. Evaluation also included some follow-up SSIs (semi-structured interviewing), conducted by telephone, to explore what the participants thought of the workshops and whether there was any potential for further research action.

The main activities were directly concerned with how to jointly bring forth and explore metaphors. I planned three main activities for W5 and two for W6, the main difference was due to the shorter time. The two common activities were bringing forth and exploring metaphors for countrysides and farming, by using different techniques, and the additional topic planned for W5 was bringing forth and exploring metaphors of FWAG.

The activities were also designed to cater for investigating *emergent* and *proposed* metaphors in different ways. In the first activity, certain metaphors are proposed and discussed separately, *after* emergent metaphors are explored. In effect, the activity consisted of two parts. In the second activity, metaphors are proposed during the activity itself. Here the facilitator 'throws suggestions into the ring', to be considered at the same time as those metaphors arising from

the participants. The proposed metaphors were selected as a reasonable mix of metaphors based on literature and earlier fieldwork⁶.

Activity 1) Metaphors of countrysides, via brainstorming and voting

Brainstorming is a relatively common technique, used to generate a lot of divergent metaphors in a short period of time (as with Martin 1991). As a group, participants were asked to say what they think about if the word "countrysides" was said⁷. I recorded their points on flip-chart paper, and participants voted which points (metaphors) they were interested in, by placing a tick next to those points. Voting involved people standing, moving about, and also getting in each other's way, which raised energy. The six to eight points with the most ticks were selected for exploration. Sub-groups of two or three people considered a selection of these, in terms of what the metaphor meant to them, and what it highlighted and hid. These discussions were continued in the main group.⁸ In W5, time allowed for individuals to explore one metaphor, that they felt enthusiastic about, that was not selected through the voting procedure.

The second part of this activity involved a group consideration of the proposed metaphors. After this, both parts were compared to reflect on the differences in discussions. Throughout all discussions, I wrote up points onto flip-chart paper for everyone to see, often as 'spider-diagrams' or 'mind-maps'.

Activity 2) Metaphors of farming, via 'Post-Its' and clustering

Instead of brainstorming as a group, people were asked to write down on 'Post-Its'⁹ their ideas about what farming involves. I also wrote down my proposed metaphors. These Post-Its were then organised by participants into clusters of related points. The clusters can effectively show visual linkages and relationships, and allow an overall view of a particular topic. The clusters were taken as the themes explored in sub-groups, in a similar way to the first activity. It was important to stress that getting the categories 'right' did not

⁶ Another possible way to select which metaphors to propose would be on the basis of the judgements made (cf. Chapters 4-7).

⁷ I then call these metaphors, which I discuss in a later section.

⁸ Which is a very different conception to 'presenting a summary of discussions'.

⁹ 'Post-Its' are sticky-backed squares that can be moved about on a surface.

matter, as the discussion which accompanies 'where does this Post-It go' was more important than where it actually ended up.

Activity 3) Metaphors of FWAG advising, via diagramming

I planned a third activity for W5, but did not have time to do it. Diagramming can involve a similar process to the Post-It activity, except that the activity is carried out in sub-groups. By this stage, I would have drawn a few diagrams as part of the discussions, to demonstrate what diagrams can look like. The advantages from diagramming comes from both seeing a structure of thinking down on paper, and also having a basis for discussion with other people (via presentations). The diagrams can give a good overview, and show interconnections visually.

9.2 The metaphors brought forth and explored during activities

In this section I give an overview of the metaphors jointly brought forth and explored during the workshops (Table 9.2)¹⁰. I have incorporated the actual details of these metaphors into the discussions of Chapters 5, 6, and 7, to save repetition¹¹. I present three diagrams in Appendix 4 to display some of the detail of the workshop discussions.

¹⁰ Some of the following metaphors may not read very well in the full form of "countrysides-as-Y". I did not insist at the time that they were put into a standard form such as 'X-as-Y'. I discuss this later.

¹¹ Another reason for discussing 'joint explorations' in with my own (Chapters 5-7) is that I am assuming the role for narrating this thesis, and hence I cannot avoid my interpretations of the workshops. The only way around this would be to jointly prepare a workshop report, which was not feasible in this research.

Table 9.2 Metaphors brought forth and explored in Workshops 5 and 6

	Workshop 5		Workshop 6	
	Metaphors (countrysides- as-...) (farming-as-) (farmers-as-)	Where I discuss these metaphors	Metaphors (countrysides- as-...) (farming-as-) (farmers-as-)	Where I discuss these metaphors
Countrysides metaphors brought forth and explored in sub-groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * working * work and live (place) * multi-purpose * wildlife habitat * Tory grandees/class * conflicts and opposites * local character * emotive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * managed * managed, experienced * polarised * wildlife habitat * polarised * polarised * tapestry * experienced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * education * lack of communication * farmers are a minority * managed * economic pressures * media influenced * litigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * not understood * not understood * victims * managed * managed, victims * polarised * victims
Additional countrysides metaphors explored individually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * having momentum * fear * political * emotive and unexplained * (arising) from past mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * changing * not understood * polarised * experienced, not understood * changing 		
My proposed metaphors for exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * tapestry * records * changing * managed (actively) * polarised * constructed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * tapestry * experienced * changing * managed * polarised * human activity systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * tapestry * records * changing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * tapestry * experienced * changing
Farming metaphors (listed clusters of Post-It notes)	natural processes: education; education-technology, businesses, way of life; stewardship; social influences, social consequences; policy, and production		victim; how perceived; what should do about it; view wanted; environment; visible; production and survival; older generation; and subsidies	

Notes:

The farming metaphors were jointly brought forth and *clustered* during the second activity of each workshop. The clusters are sometimes difficult to read in the form of 'x-as-y', and do not make very much sense when abstracted from the groups of Post-It notes and workshop discussions. I just list them here without trying to indicate where I used the revealed and concealed aspects of each metaphor. In W6, the clusters form a 'flow' or narrative. In the next section I comment on the process issues that surround jointly bringing forth and exploring metaphors.

9.3 Aspects revealed and concealed by the workshop designs

Distinguishing between those process issues that arise from considering metaphors and those issues inherent in facilitating a discussion between a group of people is difficult. That is, it is difficult to say what metaphors contributed to experiences of the workshop, as some of the experiences might have been due to people coming together at a certain time. In this section, I avoid the difficulty somewhat by making comments about metaphors *in the context of* being embedded in the design of the workshops. I also refer to 'revealed and concealed' aspects of workshops rather than good (successful) or bad (failure) points.

I claim that a discussion based on metaphors was possible in both workshops, and that neither of the workshops 'fell-flat'. I have no hesitations in calling the workshop with FWAG advisers 'a dialogue'. I hesitate calling the workshops with farming families a dialogue even though the interactions between participants were open and respectful, and they gave space to explore other participants views. I found little indication that they were willing to consider alternative views of people, especially non-farmers, who were not there at the workshop. Some of the farming families did not think that they learnt a lot from their workshop, as stated clearly by one farmer: "I don't think we've learnt a lot" [i9].

The FWAG advisers were more enthusiastic about their workshop (W5) in general. One adviser claimed that metaphors "released us" [h1], as he could give his own images and be very involved in the workshop. Another adviser reflected that:

"...(it was) refreshing and nice to be able to explore, in this case, sort of some fairly fundamental things, and hear other people's views. Because it is a type of job where you are on your own, you've built up your own ideas, and you're going forth with things that you think are right, but it is nice to hear other people's views.... I found it interesting to hear other people's comments on countryside and farming, which at least it helped me to think, well there was new stuff I hadn't thought of, but also it just helped to confirm the way I was thinking was also in tune with these other fellows around here. Which is something we don't normally do in FWAG..." [h5].

The discussions in both workshops around *countrysides* metaphors appeared much richer than those on *farming*, although farming families appeared to

conflate the two topics anyway. I did not challenge this conflation at the time as I was more interested in seeing whether metaphors could be explored, and be meaningful, rather than impose what might be an invalid distinction between farming and countrysides. At a different level, part of the richness of discussions around the first activity may indicate that it was better able to trigger discussion and involvement, and also that more time was given to the first activity in general.

I explore five aspects that were revealed and concealed in the two workshops:

- reactions to distinctions of *metaphors* within the workshop designs;
- differences between emergent and proposed metaphors;
- FWAG advisers' training;
- farming families reactions to W6, and their claim to 'already do things'; and
- suggestions for a mix of people.

9.3.1 REACTIONS TO DISTINCTIONS OF *METAPHORS* WITHIN THE WORKSHOP DESIGNS

Some FWAG advisers, during and after their workshop, suggested that the word metaphor was "academic" [e.g., h5], or "esoteric" [h2]. One adviser suggested that if I had explained metaphors as "a series of images representing countrysides", then people would "twig" immediately to what was being meant [h5]. Another proposed "keywords" as a more "down to earth" explanation: "words that provoke images" [h3]. However, this was not seen by advisers to negate the process as "metaphors released us" [h1]; and the "approach (is) important... (it is) useful for structuring; as a tool for provoking thought and discussion" [h2].

Farming families did not comment directly on *metaphors* during the workshops. Afterwards, when I asked them in SSIs, they all said that my proposed distinctions "made sense". However, they did not refer in the workshop to ideas such as considering different views, so I question the extent to which the distinctions did indeed 'make sense'. They also did not use the word 'metaphor'; even in a negative sense. This was not important in itself, as I explain shortly, but it does provide a contrast to the reactions by FWAG advisers.

The workshop with the farming families was not designed to 'test people's understandings of metaphors before and after', or to '*transfer* a concept', so

explicitly mentioning metaphors can be considered outside the scope of the workshop designs. Talking of *metaphors* may be outside of participants' experiences even after a workshop that uses metaphors to explore future countrysides. Another reason why *metaphors* might have been 'passed over' was that I did not insist on structuring statements in a "X-as-Y" format, nor on people using the words 'if' or 'as'. At the time, I did not want to introduce an 'academic' distinction that appeared irrelevant or stopped the 'flow' of discussions. Whilst I have argued that descriptions can be said to be metaphors in previous chapters, other people are not necessarily going to be using the same arguments that I do, and therefore *metaphors* can go unnoticed. In a perverse way, I could even suggest that a lack of awareness of *metaphors* is more effective in terms of exploring the research topic and making views transparent, as attention does not focus on 'the tool'. However, I would only suggest so *if* there is a genuine attempt to consider alternative views, and an awareness of metaphors seems a fundamental part of that.

The workshop with FWAG advisers included a consideration of how metaphors could inform their day-to-day activities so, in some respects, their references to metaphors could have been an emergent property of the workshop design. That is, if I had asked farmers how they could use metaphors in their activities, then they might have indicated something that showed an awareness: even if it was dismissive. I discuss some of the ways in which FWAG advisers thought they could 'use' metaphors in a later section.

Distinctions around metaphors were indirectly addressed in two ways:

- metaphors are interconnected; and
- metaphors have underlying assumptions.

The first point related to exploring metaphors individually. A very common reaction during W6 was shown by statements such as "everything is interconnected" [i9] and "there's so many other side issues associated with each individual [issue or metaphor]..." [i4]. That is, people found it difficult to consider one metaphor or statement in isolation. During exploration in sub-groups in W6, farming families tended to discuss three or four metaphors at the same time, rather than focusing on just one. One FWAG adviser suggested that there was "... cross-fertilisation between the various topics that were put up" [h5], which indicated a different side to *juxtaposing* metaphors *not* concerned with making the concealed aspects of metaphors apparent. The second point about "assumptions" refers to the proposed framework (of revealed and concealed

aspects). FWAG advisers seemed to prefer a task of exploring what assumptions were behind a metaphor, once this had come up in the workshop. For example, countrysides-as-conflicts assumes a finite resource and entrenched positions [e.g. h5]. These assumptions can probably be considered 'revealed or implied aspects'.

9.3.2 EMERGENT AND PROPOSED METAPHORS

Morgan's (1993) discussion of emergent and proposed metaphors implies that the former is preferable and richer, and proposing metaphors is only done when there are no emergent metaphors. A working distinction is metaphors that arise directly in conversations and activities within a community can be considered emergent; whereas metaphors proposed by a facilitator, either from literature or different theoretical frameworks, can be considered as proposed metaphors. Care needs to be taken that proposed metaphors are presented as alternatives, rather than 'correct' or better.

My experience in the workshops suggest that assuming that emergent metaphors are *more* meaningful is not appropriate. An example of one metaphor in both workshops that promoted a rich discussion was countrysides-as-a-tapestry (see Appendix 4). FWAG advisers found it particularly useful as it revealed declining diversity and a trend to specialisation and mono-culture [h*]. All six of the metaphors were seen as useful in creating distinctions: "(the) six metaphors, I hadn't thought (of countrysides) in that way... (it is) easy to fall in a trap of 'multi-purpose' [to cover everything]" [h5].

Specific reactions by farming families to the process of proposing metaphors, ranged from: "... (we) covered the same ground in a different way... we're not saying anything different" [i13]; to "... you were trying to get us to look at it probably from an outsider's point of view... we've been looking at it from our point of view, but some of those things you're probably trying to get us... from a townie's point of view... or somebody that's trying to watch us" [i7]. These comments perhaps reflected that farmers did not care much for the actual proposed metaphors. The comments did not reflect whether the discussion that follows was rich, or whether any different understandings were triggered by proposing the metaphors.

One FWAG adviser suggested that proposing metaphors was "going to give you a quicker, more focused discussion..." [h5]. It was "bound to be more focused, in that you've already researched the subject... (brainstorming) might pick up ones you haven't in there, but it's going to be random" [h5]. Another adviser suggested that

proposing metaphors might be a way for diverse groups to talk with one another, because: "if you've got disparate people in the room, with different backgrounds and things, it's very difficult to get talking about anything meaningful" [h3]. However, one concealed aspect was that the proposed metaphors were taken as distinct categories: "... (they are) broken down into nice neat little divisions we can all relate to"; and as "handy ways of pigeon-holing (views)..." [h5]. I propose that an explicit emphasis on juxtaposing metaphors might be one way of avoiding this problem of treating metaphors as isolated boxes. My interpretation of the process of proposing metaphors was that it enabled different distinctions to be made, and that it was a way of juxtaposing and contrasting *emergent* and *proposed* metaphors.

The comments on proposed metaphors has so far concentrated on the first technique: proposing metaphors as a separate activity. The second technique of 'throwing suggestions into the ring' is harder to comment on. Sometimes a facilitator will do this anyway, to prompt responses, or to 'kick-start' or energise a brainstorming session. Proposed metaphors lose identity as such, and can be ignored or subsumed with other suggestions. Participants have more choice as to whether they want to consider or ignore the suggestions; I was not involved in placing the 'Post-It' suggestions (apart from taking an encouraging role). Some of my suggestions were the same as those of participants.

9.3.3 FWAG ADVISERS 'TRAINING'

The letter inviting FWAG advisers to a workshop highlighted three potential benefits: exposure to ways of working with groups; exploring ideas around images¹²; and the opportunity to reflect with other FWAG advisers on issues of concern (Appendix 2). Of these, advisers were particularly enthusiastic about the 'training' component, and asked me to send them some comments on workshop designs. A lot of their work involves working with groups and conducting meetings and training sessions. These benefits from training were named in addition to any benefits from exploring metaphors:

"I think there's a lot of value in just talking actually. Frankly we might not have come up with anything that I was not aware of, but I think there is value in talking some of these things through to give new directions, but to help develop one's own thoughts" [h2].

¹² 'Landwise' involved advisers working with farmers' *visions* (see Chapter 7).

One FWAG adviser suggested why a training session was apparent: "I think probably the most valuable bit for me was to see a different style of discussing a particular topic. And thinking about how I might be able to use that in my own work... within FWAG" [h5]. FWAG runs courses on 'participative training techniques' for the advisers, although the focus of these courses appears to be on instrumentalist ways of 'getting the message across', rather than 'creating a space for learning' or reflecting on how to structure a discussion. Two advisers were about to organise seminars, and during discussions one adviser asked quite specifically: "can I side-track (and) get people's opinion on this seminar thing I'm going to do?" [h3]. One adviser, with whom I had previously co-facilitated two workshops, claimed there were benefits to looking at group processes:

"...in working with [DM, this author] I've definitely become much more two way in small group meetings. Not standing up half an hour and spouting, but actually from the word go, get people to throw in their thoughts and anxieties and so on..." [h1].

A mix of this training function, learning opportunities and a general social function of meeting FWAG advisers, led to comments that this type of workshop can be extended with FWAG advisers in general:

"...it would be really good to... there's only a small percentage of FWAG here... because of the nature of our work, there is a fairly rapid turn around of staff, and I think some staff will start and finish without having the opportunity to really discuss FWAG and its work and how it fits in within the countryside. It ought to be a fairly fundamental part of... {interjecting: of our training... [h2]}" [h5].

In addition to reflecting on ways of working, and considering the designing of seminars, FWAG advisers also considered other ways that an awareness of metaphors could inform their work. One adviser in particular outlined a series of options. Metaphors could be useful:

- "if you want people to discuss a lot of options";
- "to present a vision";
- to "structure a document";

- to "access/assess"¹³ people's attitudes to the countryside";
- to enable certain principles to be explored: "...one way I think metaphors might be useful, is a lot of conservation is based on... principles, some of which are a little bit dubious, some of them are fairly well founded...". Looking at metaphors would enable farmers to grasp "how it all fits together" and to "question why that particular, even fundamental principle is the correct thing to do" [h5].

All of these options seem plausible and consistent with those uses presented in Table 8.1. The discussion indicated that an awareness of metaphors could inform their wider activities. The uses were largely associated with groups, it was seen as unlikely that metaphors can be used in a 1:1 situation. Using metaphors was seen also to take a lot of time and commitment: "I think this sort of approach requires quite a high degree of commitment (and) interest, certainly in my general work, would be totally inappropriate..." [h4]. The general work referred to here is the 1:1 situation with farmers, during property visits. FWAG advisers were interested to hear that I was going to conduct a workshop with farming families. One adviser postulated that: "... we found it good. Whether farmers do or not [I can't say]? If put (it) in context, I'm sure they'll understand. Be ready to explore and instruct..." [h1]. Another thought that: "I suspect a lot would find it all rather academic" [h4].

9.3.4 FARMING FAMILIES ARE ALREADY DOING THINGS

Four main issues emerged out of the workshop with farming families:

- they felt they were not representative of the farming community in general;
- they agreed with each other;
- they did not learn a lot; and
- they were defensive about their role in countrysides.

On the first issue, one farmer stated: "it's like what I was saying to [DM, this author]... straight away you accept that people here (at this workshop) are going to be pro-active, because otherwise they wouldn't be here, would they? We don't, we can't represent the industry as a whole. The industry that doesn't believe in this, isn't here" [i12].

¹³ Which word could not be distinguished by listening to the tape. and during the workshop, both words "access/assess" were written down on flip-chart paper. In either case, the general sentiment is perhaps similar: to obtain a better understanding of different people's perceptions.

A workshop was also unlikely to attract "...crusty old people that wouldn't help" [i12]. Another farmer reflected that "you'll always get the same people going to meetings"; and that "farmers tend to go to farming meetings" rather than meetings with a broader focus [i7].

Coming to a workshop like W6 was used to distinguish farmers that were already doing things:

"...we all are farmers who are going to survive for the future (because) we accept these problems are there, and we're prepared to steer a course bearing these things in mind" [i9]. This farmer added: "I don't actually think we've learnt a lot, I think that's why we're in agreement, because we all of us here {finishing his sentence: are converted [i13]¹⁴. We've spent the last 10 years going over this argument, we were just trying to put it over to you. We've got it all worked out in our own minds that we've got problems and we know what they are" [i9].

I attribute three possibilities to this farmer's statements¹⁵: the workshop did not create appropriate opportunities to learn; participants did not want to explore different metaphors; or that they felt some need to make me understand and convince me that they were in the right. The first implies that the structure and design of the workshop was deficient. The other two imply that farming families did not come to learn, but to tell their view. A fourth possibility was that people were *unable*, rather than unwilling, to explore different views.

Most participants felt that they agreed with each other in the workshop: "we've all agreed, all the way down the line... no-one has really thrown up anything to disagree over, have we. And that's knowing what we are like as a group, there's usually something that comes up..." [i6]. If people agree, then that might inhibit something 'different' from emerging. This implies that the structure was deficient, either through the activities or distinctions chosen, or because of who was (or was not) invited. Different activities that 'shock' people might avoid an overall agreement. One farmer that could not participate in the workshop was renowned as being provocative, and there were jokes to the effect that it would have been different if this person came. Proposing controversial and

¹⁴ One farmer thought it was 'preaching to the converted' to have a workshop with farmers who were already interested [i13]. This is a claim also made against the activities of FWAG.

¹⁵ It is not valid to say that therefore all the participants felt this way, although another farmer added that he "wouldn't have said a great deal (was) new" [i12].

provocative statements is a role that a facilitator can take, although when I suggested that I could be more provocative, a joking response was: "you'll be out of the door quick..." [i13]. By not being controversial though, another farmer reflected that I treated them carefully and with cotton wool: "so we weren't under threat" [i12].

The workshop revealed that farmers perceived themselves as indeed being under threat: "we're getting on the defensive, aren't we..." [i6]. Further, "no-one ever pats us on the back and says 'well done'..." [i7]. The media and general public were seen to be attacking farmers: "we feel threatened" [i6]. When this defensiveness was combined with an attitude that "we know what the problems are" [i9, quoted before], or that "this isn't a new issue to us" [i13], opportunities to learn in a workshop were very constrained. A discussion on education, for example, highlighted an impression that 'we need to educate them' (see Chapter 5). My distinction 'there is no right or wrong' seemed to be totally ignored. In one sense, this raised a need to think about how the distinctions can be meaningful. In another sense, I question whether people can look at their own metaphors, and alternative metaphors, *if* they are not willing to consider alternative positions. This implied the paradox that working with metaphors can be meaningful only if people have accepted the existence of different metaphors (cf. Bawden forthcoming; Chapter 10).

Motivations for attending a workshop are also important. If a motivation is to listen to other people, and reflect on perspectives, then the workshop structure seems the main source of constrained learning opportunities. As a broad generalisation though, people came to the workshop to *help* this author in his research. Whilst it is flattering to think that relationships were sufficient for this, or that there may have been some empathy for experimenting with different ways of conducting research, it does not indicate that people were particularly willing to consider different metaphors.

The fourth possibility that I mentioned earlier was that farming families may have been unable to consider different metaphors. One reason for this can arise because there are 'traps' or dominant metaphors which constrain such an exploration. A different reason given by one farmer was that in general farmers might not have "had experience" of this sort of workshop before [i7]. She had been to college and different training courses, and said that she was used to flip-charts and so on whereas other farmers might not be. That is, the format and media could have presented barriers to an exploration of people's views.

These comments have assumed that the farming families felt that they did not learn anything from the workshop. This largely ignored another side to the workshop: the social occasion. One farmer over lunch said how he enjoyed meeting the other farmers. Comments from a different workshop in Buckinghamshire indicates the potential importance of this: "...we've met each other at a lot of different meetings through FWAG, NFU... and often at those meetings you don't get a chance to talk" [e6].

My overall impression was that the farming families *felt* they were already doing things and did not need to consider other views. The workshop structure was probably also deficient in that people from a range of occupations were not there to talk about and explore their views. The next section considers one practical suggestion by FWAG advisers that this type of workshop requires a mix of people, which might allow different metaphors to be considered and hence trigger different understandings.

9.3.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR A 'MIX' OF PEOPLE

One aspect that the workshops concealed, was that working within a defined community, in terms of occupations, might have constrained opportunities for a 'rich' mix of metaphors. Learning opportunities would then be constrained because people within the community think in similar ways: "but you're not getting different views are you, because you've got a group of like-minded people here" [i13]. A FWAG adviser suggested that "I imagine your metaphors are going to be relatively similar, whereas if you took a much broader cross-section of the general public, the variation is going to be quite enormous" [h5].

An alternative FWAG advisers propose is: "it would be very interesting to have a group of like us, five FWAG advisers; five farmers, and five people from Milton Keynes. For a whole day, and see what different group's expectations were" [h2]. A mix of people might reveal different metaphors, and promote a "cross-fertilisation" of metaphors. A mix is also justified with a *systems* approach, where a boundary for countrysides may include such a mix of people. Working with people involved in farming and countrysides does not have to be restricted to just farmers (as with Engel 1995).

A mix of people might require modifications to the workshops to take into account different discourses, and also to avoid any defensiveness. A workshop with a mix of people might imply that a higher commitment to considering alternatives is needed, and probably that more attention to 'pre-workshop'

relationship building is needed. During feedback the possibilities of arranging such a 'mixed' workshop were outlined, but there was not any significant response to this suggestion.

Suggestions for a mix of people is based on occupation or interest. One male farmer reflected in a conversation over lunch that it was good to have female farmers at the workshop (W6), which indicates that a mix of genders (and perhaps ages) could also be important to consider.

9.4 Questions arising from the workshops

One of the main questions is whether there is enough evidence to support my claims that metaphors facilitate dialogue, and whether metaphors can create a space for understandings to emerge. Understandings of countrysides may involve longer term processes and involvement than is possible in just one workshop. I question whether I was expecting people to do too much, in terms of exposure to new concepts, in just one workshop. Some different understandings are evident in terms of FWAG adviser's ways of approaching meetings. Apart from this, though, I find it difficult to substantiate my claims; although I suggest I have presented a case that the claims are worthy of further attention. Metaphors can certainly act as a suitable focus for designing a workshop, if for no other reason than because attention is paid to appreciating different views. Metaphors can also be jointly brought forth and explored, which seems a valuable contribution to thinking about creating a space for understandings to emerge.

A subsequent question is what I would do differently if I was to organise another workshop today. Would it even be a workshop? Farm walks are an exciting alternative to workshops and have the potential to reveal learning opportunities associated with a workshop in a less-formal and more 'situated' context. Walking around a farm provides visual and sense stimuli just not present in a room (though there is nothing to say that a workshop must be in a room). Walking also provides an opportunity to *experience* metaphors, as well as talk about them.

One modification is to formalise the 'X-as-Y' structure to denote a metaphor. This can confirm whether distinctions around metaphors are meaningful or not. However, the label 'metaphor' is probably unimportant to use during a workshop situation, especially as 'descriptions' or 'keywords' might suffice.

Proposing the framework of revealed and concealed aspects might not be any harder under these alternative 'labels' than what it is under metaphor.

A second modification regards the number and type of activities. Time restrictions ruled out the walk and the exploration of FWAG in Workshop 5. In Workshop 6, I cut down the number of activities and the options with activities, but still ran out of time to fully discuss the clusters of farming metaphors. The activities themselves were probably quite 'efficient' in terms of time, but too many topics or activities are not desirable in a workshop. Different activities might be justified on the grounds that the distinctions might not have been meaningful. Even if I 'announce' that there is no right and wrong, for example, it might take a role play or equivalent to work out what that might mean in the contexts of participants' daily activities.

A third modification regards how to focus more explicitly on relationships between metaphors and juxtaposing metaphors in an explicit way. Diagramming might form a suitable basis for exploring and juxtaposing metaphors because it shows relationships visually. Juxtaposing metaphors might be a simpler version of applying the framework of revealed and concealed aspects. Juxtaposing also seems possible through an interplay between emergent and proposed metaphors. A possible activity to juxtapose metaphors is to consider emergent and proposed metaphors alternatively. Simply 'throwing suggestions into the ring' in order to propose metaphors seems unsatisfying.

I have not discussed how co-researchers can make judgements between metaphors, as part of a joint exploration, as it is outside the scope of these metaphor workshops. My distinctions between appropriate, disabling and alternative metaphors might not be as useful to someone in a particular context reflecting on which metaphor he or she can use and learn from. I propose that choosing metaphors is a project possible when space has been created to reflect on different understandings. I discuss 'moving between metaphors' in the next chapter, and how that contributes to a research approach informed by an awareness of metaphors; my fifth response to the thesis question.

9.5 Reflections on Chapter 9

I have yet to see a 'satisfying' report on a workshop. I generally find them either uninformative because they miss what I see as 'vital' assumptions and detail, or boring because they provide too much detail. In addition, most workshop reports seem to be 'this is what was said', or 'this is what I did'. I have attempted to describe 'this is why I designed the workshops in a certain way, and what those designs revealed and concealed'. I am using the word 'design' in the sense of 'anticipating possibilities'.

I am not convinced that I have succeeded in producing a satisfying report. Perhaps my aim was impossible - it does seem a bit odd that I rely on experiential learning in the workshop, yet expect to see workshop accounts that I can relate to. Perhaps workshops have to be experienced as a participant in order to be meaningful: that is, provide a space to reflect on present understandings. At the least, I hope that I have been able to present an account that shows a critical reflection on my own role in the workshops.

Chapter 10 An approach for using metaphors in diverse stakeholder contexts

metaphors inspire an approach that can inform research in diverse stakeholder contexts

In this chapter, I elaborate on the fifth response to the thesis question, and develop an approach for using metaphors in diverse stakeholder contexts. The approach 'pulls together' the different responses to the question 'how can metaphors inspire researching with people?' The approach uses a distinction between the roles of researcher-narrator and researcher-facilitator, and develops both of these roles as a joint project. Using metaphors to gain an understanding of the research context, the third response to the thesis question, is described under the researcher-narrator role. Using metaphors to create a space for understandings to emerge, the fourth response, is described under a role of researcher-facilitator. I also consider ways in which these roles interact with, and inform, each other. The approach emerged from the research, but was not tested *per se*. I discuss some of the considerations around using such an approach, including:

- how co-researchers can judge and 'move between metaphors';
- issues of dominant and reified metaphors; and
- contexts in which the approach could inform research.

10.1 An approach using metaphors

Any one of the previous four responses to the thesis question can inform research in diverse stakeholder contexts. *All* four responses combine to provide a way to approach these contexts and to reflect on what research might be useful. I use the word "approach" in the sense of *starting considerations* rather than *method*, to emphasise a reflection on the roles of metaphors in research. A method does not necessarily entail this sort of reflection, and there might be a tendency to interpret a method as a 'recipe' or blueprint.

I take an awareness of metaphors by a researcher as a necessary pre-requisite to using metaphors explicitly as part of research. That is not to say that *all* of my

discussion in Chapter 2 is essential, although it provides a suitable 'springboard' from which to consider the combined approach.

The discussion of researcher roles in Chapter 3 provides a starting point to explain the approach that I am proposing. A consideration of the researcher context is essential, including an awareness of:

- the traditions from which the research arises;
- the position of the researcher, and different roles;
- participation in a certain research community;
- the motivations, purposes and interests of the researcher; and
- the institutional settings in which the research is embedded.

I assume that a 'negotiation' between potential co-researchers and topics has already taken place, and that invitations to be involved have been extended and accepted¹. I focus on two roles: researcher-narrator and researcher-facilitator (see Figure 3.1). I discuss these roles separately, explore the linkages between the two, and then bring it all together under a combined approach.

10.1.1 CONTRIBUTIONS OF A RESEARCHER-NARRATOR

A researcher-narrator can use metaphors to gain, and present, an understanding of the research context. I described this role in Chapters 4-7. The researcher takes responsibility for the content of his or her understanding, and also of the process by which it is gained.

I propose 5 steps in this role for the researcher:²

- 1) *make initial distinctions around metaphor*, by choosing to think of a research context *as* metaphorical and in terms of descriptions. This implies that exploring metaphors can enrich a researcher's understanding of the research context and contribute to developing relationships with people involved in the research context;

¹ This is an important assumption, especially for research in diverse stakeholder contexts. I partially relax this assumption when I consider the interplay between roles, as invitations can be extended and accepted through the researcher-narrator role.

² I have presented the steps sequentially, although there does not seem to be an intrinsic reason why this has to be the case.

- 2) *bring forth metaphors* of that research context. Some of the possible sources of metaphors are outlined in Figure 4.1. The sources which are seen as relevant, and the institutional settings and skills of the researcher, will influence the choice of methods;
- 3) *explore the metaphors* by considering the revealed and concealed aspects of metaphors. Juxtaposing metaphors and looking for relationships between metaphors can enhance an exploration of metaphors;
- 4) *judge appropriate, disabling and alternative metaphors*, which can clarify how metaphors contribute to the researcher's understandings; and
- 5) *iterate* from steps 1-4, involving either different people, different sources of metaphors, or different issues and 'windows'.

The main addition to the role of researcher-narrator is to consider *iteration* more explicitly. I outlined a *systems* definition of iteration in Chapter 2 as re-drawing the boundary of a system by considering different perspectives, purposes and/or levels. I suggested that considering alternative metaphors is a way of making an iteration. My narrative of future countrysides in Chapters 4-7 implicitly used several iterations through different 'phases' of research, such as in fieldwork, analysing data, re-defining the foci for my research, and in preparing earlier written drafts. However, what I am referring to here is to *iterate by involving different sources of metaphors, different people, and different issues and windows*. Different issues or topics might emerge as being more immediate and relevant to the people within the research context, and *changing topics (or people) probably entails a 'negotiation' as before*.

I do not include an end-point in this process, as that will be defined in terms of purposes and interests of the researcher and also the institutional settings: which is part of considering the researcher context and roles of the researcher. I propose that researcher understandings are not an end-point either, as these emerge by involvement in such a process. Further, I propose that all of the steps should be documented, to allow later reflection, a further bringing forth of metaphors, as well as providing sincerity.

The role of other people in the research depends also on the purposes of the research. If the purpose is to 'extract' an understanding, then people involved are merely sources of information and research subjects. I claim that people

can be co-researchers, even in this role of narration, as I will explain in the section on *interplay* between research roles.

10.1.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF A RESEARCHER-FACILITATOR

A researcher-facilitator can use metaphors to create a space for understandings to emerge. I described this role in Chapters 8 and 9. Responsibility is shared between co-researchers for content and process, by an extension and acceptance of invitations to be involved in the research.

I propose 6 steps directly included in the role of the researcher-facilitator:

- 1) *propose initial distinctions around metaphors*, and anticipate ways in which those distinctions can be meaningful. Explaining some posters and giving an example, as I did in the metaphor workshops might not be sufficient for these distinctions to be accepted;
- 2) *consider activities for jointly bringing forth and exploring metaphors*. These activities can be embedded in group activities such as workshops or farm walks;
- 3) *consider activities to jointly juxtapose metaphors* and consider what each metaphor implies and does not imply (a proxy for revealed and concealed aspects). A process of juxtaposing metaphors can also include *proposing metaphors*³;
- 4) *revisit the distinctions around metaphors*, and propose further distinctions around judging metaphors, choosing between metaphors, and dominant and reified metaphors;*
- 5) *consider activities to facilitate processes of 'moving between metaphors'*;^{*} and
- 6) *iterate* from steps 1-5, in ways that co-researchers indicate. This however, might involve the researcher-facilitator anticipating and proposing possibilities for further research action.

I have marked steps 4 and 5 with an asterix [*] because they have not been discussed in previous chapters. I propose that 'moving between metaphors' is

³ *Proposed* metaphors are also jointly explored (i.e., proposing metaphors also affects step 2).

part of creating a space for different understandings to emerge, although it was outside of the scope of the metaphor workshops to consider. I explain what might be involved in moving between metaphors in a later section, and also discuss dominant and reified metaphors as these can constrain moving between metaphors.

As with the researcher-narrator role, there is no end-point. This will depend on researcher context, as well as the commitment of co-researchers to exploring the research context.

Implicit in these 6 steps are the following roles of co-researchers:

- 1) *accept, or at least tolerate, initial distinctions around metaphors.* This implies that co-researchers are able, and willing, to consider alternative views;
- 2) *jointly bring forth metaphors,* by participating in, and possibly suggesting, group activities;
- 3) *juxtapose metaphors.* by participating in, and possibly suggesting, group activities;
- 4) *accept, or at least tolerate, further distinctions around metaphors;*
- 5) *explore ways of moving between metaphors;*
- 6) *iterate* from steps 1-5 depending on his/her own needs and commitment, and suggestions for who else they would like to see involved in an exploration of the research context.

The word 'metaphor' does not have to be included in the initial distinctions, and the words *descriptions* or *keywords* are preferable if 'metaphor' can alienate people. I suggest that 'revisiting' metaphor distinctions will probably involve using the word 'metaphor' in order to talk about moving between metaphors. However, I make this suggestion without empirical support.

10.1.3 AN INTERPLAY BETWEEN TWO ROLES

I claim that the two roles can be concurrent and, further, the activities under one role informs the activities under the other role. At one level, a researcher-narrator role is apparent all of the time because a researcher normally appropriates the reporting of research activities rather than involving other people. In this thesis this is especially the case. As I also assumed a researcher-facilitator role during fieldwork activities, some sort of interplay between the two roles is possible.

I propose three ways that the roles can interact (Figure 10.1):

- through relationship building;
- through researcher reflections on joint activities; and
- through proposing alternative metaphors.

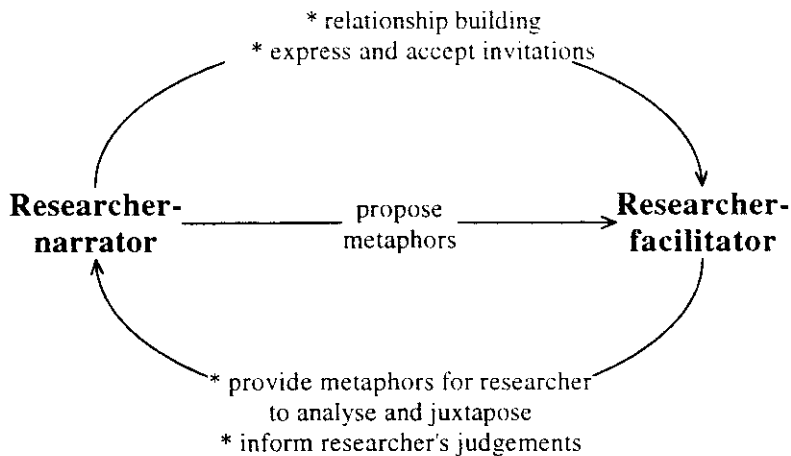


Figure 10.1 Interplay between researcher roles of narration and facilitation

I have outlined how the methods I chose to bring forth metaphors both rely on, and contribute to, building relationships. These relationships, under a researcher-narrator role, can contribute to relationships needed to jointly bring forth and explore metaphors: a researcher-facilitator role. This contribution describes the first type of interplay between the roles. In addition, the invitations to jointly bring forth and explore metaphors can be *expressed and accepted* through a researcher-narrator role. A vivid example is how farming families were invited to workshop 5 *through* a participant-observation phase.

The second interplay comes from a researcher-narrator reflecting on metaphors and activities apparent through a researcher-facilitator role. An example is a researcher later analysing or juxtaposing metaphors that were jointly brought forth. A joint exploration also influences the judgements about a particular metaphor. For example, if discussions during a workshop are 'unproductive' or damaging, then a researcher might judge that metaphor as disabling. I was certainly influenced by *how* FWAG advisers and farming families discussed a particular metaphor when I wrote about that particular metaphor in the thesis.

The third interplay comes from a researcher-narrator proposing metaphors for joint exploration. I can propose appropriate or alternative metaphors that may be able to trigger 'rich' discussions. If metaphors brought forth in a researcher-narrator role are used in this way, and proposing metaphors contributes to a joint exploration, then I can claim that the research is not 'extractive' and people can be called co-researchers. This last comment is my explanation of how a researcher-narrator role can be considered a part of researching *with* people.

The interplay between the two roles is an important part of the approach which I am developing. There only remains one task: to outline how I have *combined* the different steps and interplay between the roles into an overall approach.

10.1.4 COMBINING THESE ROLES INTO AN APPROACH FOR USING METAPHORS

The approach, *from the researcher's perspective*, that emerges from combining the different roles and interplay is shown pictorially in Figure 10.2. The right-hand side of the diagram would have to be modified to take into account how the approach can be experienced from a co-researcher's perspective. This is too difficult to portray on a single diagram.

In verbal terms, the approach for using metaphors is:

- 1) *distinguish between researcher roles*;
- 2) *make initial distinctions around metaphor*, that can be acceptable to potential co-researchers; then

As a researcher-narrator

- 3) *bring forth metaphors* of the research context;
- 4) *explore and juxtapose the metaphors*;
- 5) *judge appropriate, disabling and alternative metaphors*;
- 6) *iterate* from steps 3-5; and

Concurrently, as a researcher-facilitator

- 7) *facilitate a process of jointly bringing forth metaphors*;
- 8) *facilitate a process of jointly juxtaposing and exploring metaphors*, including proposing appropriate and alternative metaphors;
- 9) *propose further distinctions around metaphors* of judging and choosing between metaphors;
- 10) *facilitate processes of 'moving between metaphors'*;
- 11) *iterate* from steps 7-10; and
- 12) if desirable, *iterate* from steps 1-11.

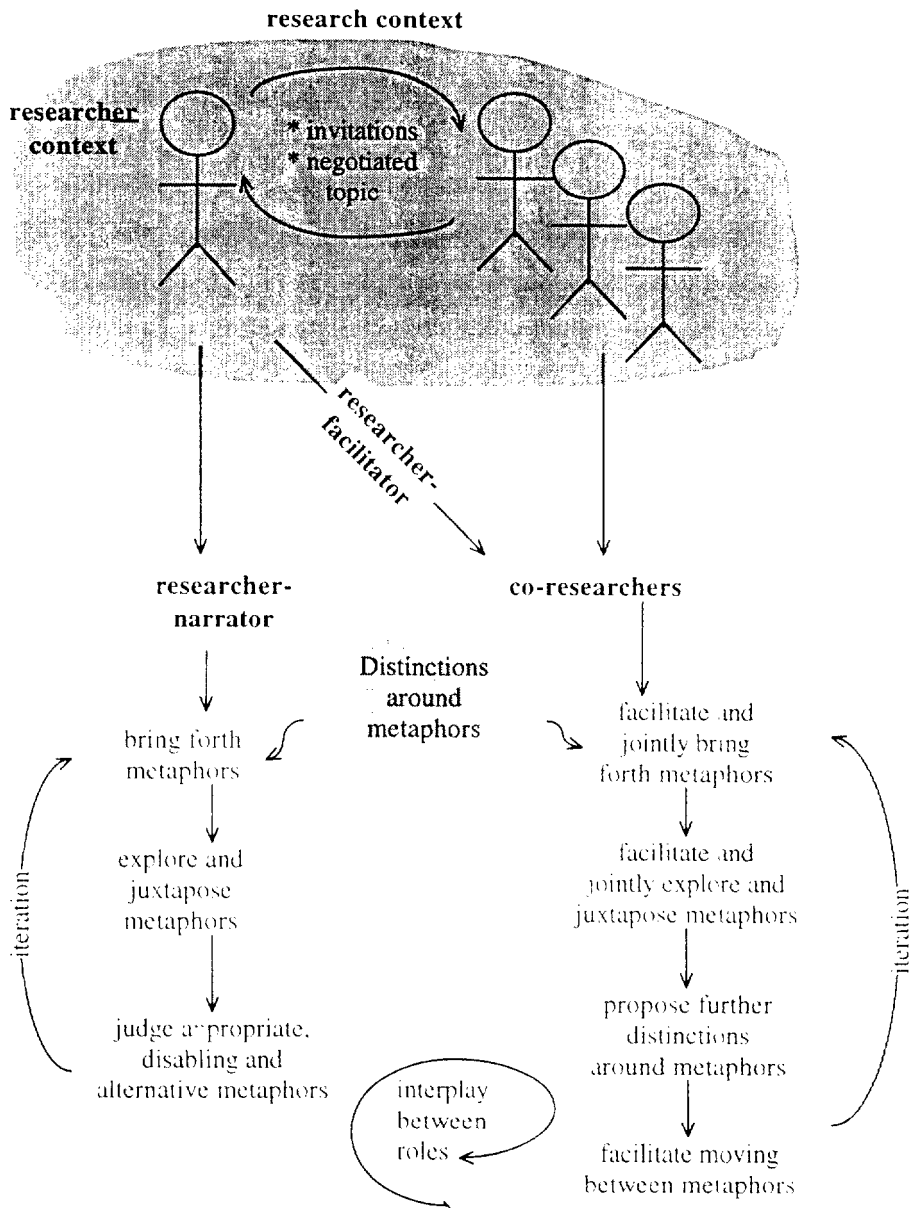


Figure 10.2 An approach for using metaphors in diverse stakeholder contexts, from a researcher's perspective

As a preliminary conclusion, the approach seems a powerful way to combine aspects of researching with people and an explicit consideration of metaphors. I propose that the approach can inform research in diverse stakeholder contexts, particularly because it entails a reflection on the roles of the researcher as well as a way to appreciate a diversity in understandings. The approach, which is my fifth response to the thesis question, has emerged from my previous four responses. As such, it is grounded in the experiences gained from the research. I have not used the approach to inform my research, however, and in that sense it remains untested. In a later section, I consider the research contexts that this approach might be able to inform (and hence be investigated as an approach). Before I discuss research contexts I need to 'tie up a loose thread' involved in steps 9 and 10: what it means to talk of 'moving between metaphors' as part of a collaborative research inquiry.

10.2 How co-researchers can judge and 'move between metaphors'

As a researcher-narrator, I claimed responsibility for judging the metaphors that I have presented in the thesis. However, co-researchers can also judge metaphors and also decide whether their understandings of the research context are desirable. That is, I claim that co-researchers can ask the 'so what?' question through exploring metaphors, and consider what changes they want to make to their metaphors and understandings. I have implicitly considered what exploring metaphors of a research context means to me, and what changes I can make, through the writing of this thesis. Considering these questions with co-researchers was both outside of the scope of the metaphor workshops and what was feasible within the research for a PhD. In this section I consider what might be involved in a process of co-researchers, including myself, moving between metaphors.

I use the expression 'moving between metaphors' rather than 'changing metaphors', as the latter has the somewhat inappropriate connotation of a deterministic and instrumentalist attempt to 'change understandings *to this better metaphor*'. If understandings can indeed change, then describing this as an emergent rather than determined process is consistent with my expression 'creating space for understandings to emerge'. My attempt to create space for change avoids claims that understandings *should* change, and that change is for the better. This is also pertinent given that metaphors can be *disabling*.

I discuss three considerations relevant to moving between metaphors:

- change happens anyway, and is not specific;
- how someone can say that moving between metaphors has occurred; and
- deliberately changing metaphors is difficult.

By proposing that people "switch between metaphors" in ordinary conversation, Shotter (1993) implies that moving between metaphors is not specific and possibly not even deliberate. The ease of 'switching between metaphors' also implies that moving between metaphors is neither a fundamental nor a long-term change. If I extend his argument, then I do not have to worry about co-researchers' moving between metaphors, or the judgements of co-researchers, as this process is transient and embedded in conversations. That is, the research approach that I have outlined does not need to explicitly consider steps 9 and 10.

However, Shotter is talking about 'implicit' metaphors. My approach is concerned with those metaphors 'brought forth', which are then treated as 'explicit'. I suggest that for research purposes it is valid to distinguish between a dialogue exploring explicit metaphors and an 'ordinary' conversation that implicitly uses metaphors. The relevance of Shotter's argument to this discussion is to raise the possibility that moving between metaphors is not specific or deliberate. This is consistent with saying that understandings emerge, or are triggered, rather than determined.

A second consideration is to outline how moving between metaphors may be identified. Espoused changes in understandings and actions are the most obvious ways of ascribing a change between metaphors. However, changes in action are potentially very long term, and outside the scope of a PhD to ascertain. If people participate in different types of conversations, with different people, then this may be a more feasible way in which moving between metaphors can be ascribed. A further way that a change in metaphors might be manifest is by a change in vocabularies (cf. Rorty 1980; Shotter 1993). Merely talking explicitly about different metaphors might provide such a change in vocabulary.

Morgan (1993) implicitly suggests another way in which moving between metaphors can be manifest: by describing this change itself in terms of metaphors. Morgan describes a case where members of an organisation considered metaphors of self-organisation, but came up with an image of a pot

"boiling dry" (*ibid.*, p175-94). With this image, 'hot' ideas for change would evaporate if they were not grounded in feasible action. The actual metaphor is not important, rather I am interested in the thought of explicitly describing a change process in terms of metaphors. I suggest that an area worthy for further explication is whether explicitly considering different metaphors of 'moving between metaphors' is a suitable way of conceptualising steps 9 and 10 of my proposed approach. Moving between metaphors would thus involve bringing forth and exploring metaphors of change.

The third consideration is that moving between metaphors might be intrinsically difficult, as claimed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 145), which implies that it is outside of the scope of a research project to consider these processes:

"...it is by no means an easy matter to change the metaphors we live by. It is one thing to be aware of the possibilities inherent in [a certain metaphor], but it is a very different and far more difficult thing to live by it..."

"much of our unconscious everyday activity is structured in terms of [a certain metaphor] that we could not possibly make a quick or easy change to [another metaphor] on the basis of a conscious decision" (*ibid.*, p145).

Deliberately choosing metaphors also assumes that people want to, and are able to, change their metaphors. Certain metaphors might inhibit change, such as 'reified' and 'favoured' metaphors. Reified metaphors are those metaphors dictated by circumstance, whilst 'favoured' metaphors are those metaphors chosen to suit a particular purpose. Both can influence a process of moving between metaphors, as I outline below.

10.2.1 REIFIED AND DOMINANT METAPHORS

Reification implies that certain metaphors have 'become true', literal, and unchanging. Just as language can be considered to become 'literal' through acceptance and repeated use, reification can be considered to occur in the same

way⁴. A reified metaphor is thus the same as a 'dead' metaphor. I experienced several metaphors during the research that seemed taken-for-granted and not questioned. Farming-as-production, and farming-as-a business are two such examples which might then be called reified, or dominant.

Some commentators see reified metaphors as "problems": "*it is possible to take the metaphor too literally... the person can believe that the metaphor is the reality instead of a representation of it*" (see Merali and Martin 1994: 18⁵).

The explanation of reification is naive and can be ignored⁶, however 'too literally' implies that reified metaphors constrain other alternatives. Hence reified metaphors can act as 'traps', and using similar arguments as before, reified metaphors are not problems if alternative metaphors are considered. I propose that reification implies a lack of consideration of alternative metaphors rather than depend on any intrinsic property of that metaphor.

Reified metaphors, as accepted metaphors, draw attention to what is labelled 'dominant' metaphors. Flood and Jackson (1991a), for example, build their approach for intervention in organisations around dominant metaphors (TSI-see Chapter 8). Their approach assumes that dominant metaphors exist and, further, that these can be identified. I made specific attempts in earlier chapters to avoid claiming the existence of metaphors *independent of observation and distinction* (by invoking Heidegger's bringing forth). I question the validity of the concept of *dominant* metaphors in general, unless it is qualified by a statement 'as identified by whom'; which sort of defeats the purpose of referring to all-pervasive metaphors. Cummings (1994: 580) attacks the notion of dominant metaphors within the context of a TSI inquiry on five grounds:

- that TSI draws on Morgan's metaphors, but Morgan's thesis was "organisations are many things at once";
- dominance assumes that people can come to a consensus about what is dominant (and how would this work in practice: by a majority vote?);

⁴ Shotter provides an interesting quote from Wittgenstein: "*A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside of it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably*" (1993: 79).

⁵ Merali and Martin list five problems of using metaphors: reification, distraction, distortion, manipulation, and disfunctionality (ibid., p18). These will be discussed as they become relevant to this story.

⁶ except that it provides a straw man to knock down.

- dominance cannot be picked independently of the observer;
- it is awkward to juxtapose the dominance of metaphors with the 'complementarism' of methods which is also espoused; and
- concentrating on dominant metaphors ignores diversity and may be unproductive: "*metaphors are insightful because they are different*" (*ibid.*, p580, emphasis original).

The last point is very important in the context of this research. The framework emphasises exploring the revealed and concealed aspects of any metaphor. Further, it is the revealed and concealed aspects, rather than the metaphor, that provide opportunities for learning. Focusing on dominant metaphors constrains this exploration.

Morgan has used 'dominant' metaphors, but in the context of "convenient focusing devices" to help concentrate on discussing other metaphors (1993: 193-47). It seems possible to discount dominance and reification, *except* that it indicates that alternative metaphors may be difficult to consider. This may also constrain the possibilities for moving between metaphors. Three possible constraining factors are:

- considering metaphors depends on certain power relations;
- discourse precludes alternatives; and/or
- an awareness of metaphors is needed before alternative metaphors can be considered.

Morgan establishes two broad paths: that individuals can 'real-ise' their preferred metaphors, or that underlying power relations determine metaphors (1993: 274-5). The first path is more consistent with *Imagisation*, and encourages new and liberating actions (*op.cit.*). The second path suggests that to change metaphors "*one has to begin by addressing underlying power relations*" (*op.cit.*). The use of the terms 'power relations' rather than power is indicative of the influence of Foucault's efforts to clarify 'how power is experienced': as "*embedded in the language, routines and discourses that shape everyday life*" (Morgan 1993: 274). There is hardly space to consider 'power' in this thesis, except to deflect a potential criticism that it has not been explicitly treated. Considering alternative metaphors, rather than insisting on a

⁷ this point also uses the image of 'boiling dry', which I used earlier.

few, takes into account how power may be experienced. Indeed metaphors can perhaps be used to reveal 'underlying power relations', as with the exploration of the "countrysides-as-polarised" metaphor. I suggest that rather than asking whether power relations determine metaphors and inhibit moving between metaphors, it might be more productive to ask what sorts of metaphors can address issues such as power. 'Response-ability' is one candidate that I have explored elsewhere (McClintock and Ison 1994b).

The second factor, that discourse constrains choice of metaphors, is perhaps inevitable. Rorty (1989) emphasises that an observer cannot step outside of language. However, alternative vocabularies can be chosen, and it appears that efforts to create different metaphors are needed before vocabularies can change. This leaves a weak impression that discourse indeed constrains metaphors and moving between metaphors, but there is no alternative than to consider new metaphors which change that discourse.

The third constraining factor is that an awareness of metaphors is needed before alternatives can be considered or chosen. Bawden (forthcoming) draws on Salner's notion of "epistemic competence" and argues that in relation to 'systemic' thinking:

"...(people) need to reach a particular level of 'epistemic' development before they are able to really see the merits of thinking and acting in systemic ways. However they are only likely to reach this stage of development if they are self critical of their present approaches, and the assumptions on which they are based. They need to be able to think in systemic ways in order to appreciate the advantages of thinking in systemic ways" (ibid., p13).

Whilst it is easy to disagree that people 'need a certain way of thinking' as implied by 'epistemic competence'⁸, the stated paradox is relevant to a discussion of reified metaphors constraining a process of moving between metaphors⁹. An awareness of metaphors may enable an easier transition between alternative metaphors, and therefore a priority is to create such an

⁸ The epistemology that Salner views as necessary is "contextual relativism" (see Bawden forthcoming). The insistence that people must accept this epistemology detracts from what it can reveal and conceal about articulating assumptions.

⁹ It is also a reminder to be precise about terms: people do not *need* to be aware of metaphors, rather it is a question of what an awareness of metaphors can enable...

awareness. An awareness of metaphors should come through participating in bringing forth and exploring metaphors. However, I suggest that before moving between metaphors can be considered, the distinctions around metaphors need further attention. That is why I have put in the extra step of revisiting distinctions into the proposed approach. Brendlinger makes a similar point about communication: "*we work with people who don't want to move from [a certain metaphor] or don't yet grasp the differences or significances... what can we do to enlarge our thinking processes to include other metaphors of communication?*" (1992: 92). Her use of the word "include" might be quite significant, as moving between metaphors perhaps has connotations of "replace". She also pointed to another reason for not moving between metaphors, that people do not want to. This leads into a discussion on 'favoured' metaphors.

10.2.2 FAVOURED METAPHORS

If people prefer certain metaphors above other metaphors, then moving between metaphors might be somewhat constrained. The main difference between favoured and reified metaphors is where the metaphors are deliberately chosen, rather than determined by circumstances, although the distinction is hazy as favoured metaphors may well become reified. Favoured metaphors imply that people might not want to change their images, either because they are comfortable or because they are serving some purpose.

Morgan (1993: 290) suggests that metaphors only have an impact when they "*resonate*" and "*take hold*". Resonance creates energy and involvement in a process of exploration (*op.cit.*). Certain metaphors can become favoured if they continue to trigger this energy and involvement. Resonance also has connotations of 'comfort'.

McEachern (1992) discusses a different reason why certain metaphors might be favoured: *strategic representation*¹⁰. That is, by using certain metaphors to select desirable characteristics, people can portray an acceptable self-identity.

¹⁰ I also discussed McEachern's strategic representation in Chapter 4, in the context of why certain metaphors might be brought forth.

For example:

"farmers would thus say 'farming is business' in order to justify particular policies or actions or to oppose conservation legislation. In doing this, they ignored or suppressed substantial parts of what farming was for them in their everyday life and work...what farmers were doing was focusing on particular aspects of what they did to represent the whole" (McEachern 1992: 167).

McEachern follows Lakoff and Johnson's description of metonymy: using a part to refer to the whole (1980: 35) rather than 'metaphor' *per se*¹¹. This notion of 'partiality' is not necessary, and there is a more productive way of viewing this selective use of certain metaphors. Certain metaphors are favoured in order to *exclude* other metaphors. That is, the purpose is *not* to consider alternative metaphors. An implication is that moving between metaphors will also be excluded while there are these favoured metaphors.

McEachern continued that: *"[the metaphor of farmers-as-stewards] was (used to) mount a political position which constructed farmers as the people to conserve and protect the countrysides as a national heritage while remaining in control of the land" (ibid., p170).* Hence metaphors can be seen to have political significance, at least when they are used in this way. This seems the reverse case to 'metaphors-as-determined by power relations': perhaps it suggests that metaphors determine power relations. It does imply that there are reasons why people may *want* to use certain metaphors. This may be behind another of Merali and Martin's "problems" with metaphors: that they can be manipulated (1994: 18). However, similar conclusions from those of the consideration of power relations appear relevant: look for metaphors that can address these issues. A political significance of metaphors can also contribute to an exploration of how institutions may be embedded in certain metaphors (cf. Chapter 7).

¹¹ Lakoff and Johnson distinguish between metaphors and metonyms as follows: *"Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding. Metonymy, on the other hand, has primarily a referential function, that is, it allows us to use one entity to stand for another" (1980: 36).* The examples given for metonymy are of the type: using things like "good heads" to refer to "intelligence". The distinction between metaphors and metonyms is only important because McEachern located her work with respect to metonyms, even though "farming is business" is clearly considered a metaphor for this research. She presents 'business' and 'nurture' as *"(summarised) strands of debate"* (1992: 159).

Reified, dominant and favoured metaphors all act in a similar way: to constrain exploration of alternative metaphors and moving between metaphors. I conclude that the distinctions around metaphors in joint explorations with co-researchers can enhance the approach that I have proposed, if they draw attention to how *using* metaphors can be constrained. This seems to be placing a lot of importance on how distinctions can become meaningful. My discussion might go some of the way towards clarifying what it can mean to talk of moving between metaphors and thereby tying up one loose thread in the approach that I have outlined.

10.3 Research contexts that can be informed by an awareness of metaphors

The approach emerged out of the research experiences and from responding to the thesis question. As such, it has not been used to inform research practice nor 'tested' for its utility. *Using* the approach is one major area for further research, possibly as a 'pilot' with a small group of people. In this section, I describe some ways in which the approach can inform research in diverse stakeholder contexts. I focus on diverse stakeholder contexts, although institutional contexts are also relevant. One such institutional context is FWAG, and I claim that the approach is also relevant to facilitate a joint reflection on their structure, roles, and activities: a general extension of my exploration of FWAG in Chapter 7.

Using the approach as a *method*, and following the 12 steps, is a conceivable way of using the approach as 'part of a participatory research tool-kit'. However, until it has been developed further and tested, I assume this is rather unlikely. One reason is that there already seems a plethora of 'packaged' approaches, some of which are in extensive use (such as SSM, PRA, and RAAKS). Another reason is that I have developed the approach using methods that are both labour intensive and open ended. The first is constraining in researcher contexts that do not afford the luxury of time. The second, whilst advantageous to developing relationships and researching with people, implies a different ethic than following a step-wise method anyway.

I see a little more potential for using the approach for 'training-the trainers', that is, in raising awareness amongst practitioners of different metaphors, and of how to work with a diversity of understandings. One obvious audience for using the approach in this way includes FWAG advisers. This training use probably overlaps with an 'institutional' use of reflecting on the structure, roles

and activities of an organisation, except that the latter implies involving others in the organisation rather than just advisers.

The most potential that I see for using the approach is in raising awareness amongst researchers of the contributions of:

- metaphors, and how they might be used in research;
- roles of the researcher and researching *with* people;
- relationship building;
- explaining, appreciating and creating a diversity of understandings.

It is in this sense that I describe "approach" in terms of *starting considerations*: in order to emphasise that the approach might have potential to create a space for reflection on what research is appropriate in diverse stakeholder contexts. In this sense, the approach can also be used to organise interdisciplinary research.

In terms of actual research contexts in which to use the approach, I suggest that *future countrysides* is perhaps too broad a context. For the purposes of exploring the richness and diversity of metaphors from a researcher's perspective, and developing ideas about how metaphors can inspire researching with people, future countrysides is a very worthy research context. However, the potential for creating space for change is very limited: countrysides is too grandiose and long-term¹².

I experienced many other issues as more important, and more immediate, to the day-to-day lives of some of the people involved in the research. 'Mad cow disease' or BSE¹³, was one issue in 1996 that dominated media and farming matters even for non-beef farmers. Issues like BSE also have profound implications for 'countrysides'¹⁴, with effects on stock numbers and grazing, appearance of landscapes, farm profitability, and integrity of certain production

¹² Although this is where researcher context, and institutional settings, are important. I discuss researcher context later. An agency such as The Countryside Commission, for example, might not consider it as too grandiose a context, whereas a PhD researcher might.

¹³ BSE is bovine spongiform encephalopathy. The concern was that it might be linked to Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease in humans.

¹⁴ For example, "*Beef farming plays an important role in maintaining traditional landscapes and habitats, and the continuing export ban on British beef is causing immediate short-term problems with the threat of more long-term problems looming*" (Anon/CoCo 1996: 2).

processes. Would a topic like this be conducive to developing and using an approach based on metaphors? Negative responses are easy to think of: "it wouldn't, because it is a political decision"; "it's too emotional, and the press have sensationalised it and blown it out of all proportion"; and "it will be over quickly once the government imposes a slaughter policy". However, I claim that this issue depends just as much on ways of understanding as countrysides, and that the approach could be appropriate for a topic like this. Further, *metaphors* could raise awareness that BSE is not just a problem to be solved, but a questioning of the reification of certain farming metaphors, such as: farming-as-*intensive* production, and farmers-as-autonomous¹⁵.

I plucked the issue of BSE 'out of the air' to both illustrate a possible context as well as to indicate how it would be possible to think about using the approach. Workshop experiences with 'Set-aside' (Workshops 3 and 4) confirm that this topic, too, could be amenable to such an approach. Indeed, it is hard to think of a topic that does not involve 'ways of thinking'. Other topics and contexts are possible, however these also depend on a negotiation with potential co-researchers. I have only considered farming-based research contexts above, as my motivation was to work with farming families.

A consideration of possible research contexts includes an awareness of researcher context which, as I outlined at the start of the chapter, includes:

- the traditions from which the research arises;
- the position of the researcher, and different roles;
- participation in a certain research community;
- the motivations, purposes and interests of the researcher; and
- the institutional settings in which the research is embedded.

In addition, possible research contexts for using the approach depend on the substance of 'negotiations' with potential co-researchers. As such, I cannot name any further specific research contexts outside of such a negotiation. I suggest though, that the scope for using the approach amongst diverse stakeholder contexts is quite high- certainly high enough for me to commend the approach as worthy of further consideration. I also suggest that the

¹⁵ it could also question a tendency to draw a boundary around a farm unit and treat feed as inputs. A different boundary can be drawn to include feed manufacturers (and indeed other organisations and processes).

approach can go some way to countering White and Taket's concern that "... (the) potential of metaphor as a paradigm has been lost: because the use of metaphors has not yet recognised adequately the proliferation of diversity and difference" (1995: 3).

10.4 Reflections on Chapter 10

One motivation for developing an approach came from a colleague who suggested that metaphors had potential for being part of a 'participatory methods tool-kit'. I disagreed with the concept of a 'tool-kit' that researchers can select from, however, it started me thinking that proposing an approach was a way of emphasising how an awareness of metaphors could lead to different ways of conducting research. Through writing and reflecting on research experiences, the approach has developed into what I have presented in this chapter. Doubtlessly it needs further development and refinement, not the least to actually use it to inform research practice.

In some ways, I regret that I could not both develop and use the approach within this PhD. A PhD seems a suitable context for developing an approach, because of the emphasis on reflection, but not for using that approach. However, I feel compelled to indicate that this chapter elaborates on just one response, albeit an important one, out of five responses to the thesis question. I certainly could not have developed the approach without considering the material encompassed in the previous four responses. I feel that the approach can provide me, and possibly others, with a "springboard" for approaching research in diverse stakeholder contexts, and I look forward to possibilities of it doing so. These possibilities, of course, remain outside the scope of this PhD.

In the next and final chapter, I revisit the thesis question in the light of my five responses, and outline some of the learning and new questions *brought forth* by responding to the thesis question.

Chapter 11 Revisiting the thesis question

how can metaphors inspire researching with people?

In this chapter, I return to the thesis question having developed and elaborated on five responses. I restate the narrative of the thesis, which was based on the five responses, and then look to what the responses imply for agricultural research. I look at how well my initial concerns were addressed, and what were my main learning points in the thesis. I raise questions that have emerged as worthy of further research efforts. I conclude this thesis by commenting on metaphors and inspiration.

11.1 The thesis narrative and the five responses to the thesis question

In the preceding chapters, I have elaborated on five responses to the thesis question: *'how can metaphors inspire researching with people?'* These responses were:

- metaphors provide a way to understand our understandings, and how language is used;
- metaphors provide a way to reflect on research itself;
- metaphors provide a way to understand the research context and to appreciate a diversity of understandings;
- metaphors provide ways of creating space for understandings to emerge; and
- metaphors inspired an approach that can inform research in diverse stakeholder contexts.

In Chapter 1, I gave some background to the thesis question and why I was concerned with ways of conducting research in diverse stakeholder situations. I combined my interest in agriculture with 'people' and environmental issues, in the research context: *how future countrysides can come about*. I outlined how

farming families and members of FWAG were the main people involved in this research.

In Chapter 2, I elaborated on the second response, by considering some theoretical aspects of metaphors and how metaphors can be central to our ways of understanding. I developed a recursive and iterative link between metaphors and understandings, by invoking a *hermeneutic circle*, which implied that metaphors can be used to *explain, appreciate* and *create* different understandings. My interest in different understandings arose from considering diverse stakeholder contexts apparent in agricultural research. I considered how metaphors have been said to work, how language can be seen to be metaphorical, and proposed relationships between models, paradigms and metaphors. I concluded the discussion on metaphor theory by suggesting we might agree that a metaphor is *a metaphor*, by thinking of descriptions and the use of the words 'is' and 'as'. I claimed that metaphors are distinguished, rather than exist independently of distinction, and I emphasised an explicit metaphor with the notation of 'X-as-Y', or 'Y'.

In Chapter 3, I elaborated on the second response, and looked at metaphors of research. Reflecting on metaphors of research was a powerful way to address one of my main concerns: 'what is it that research is trying to do?'. I outlined what the 'with' implies in 'researching with people', and how it included myself as a researcher. I then chose four relevant metaphors: research-as-action, research-as-narration, research-as-facilitation, and research-as-responsible. These metaphors defined the various roles that a researcher could take, as well as the co-researching roles of other people involved in the research. I introduced a distinction between research and researcher context, in order to appreciate 'the position of the researcher'.

In Chapters 4-7, I elaborated on the third response, and explicitly used metaphors to gain an understanding of the research context. In Chapter 4, I described how metaphors could be brought forth, and I chose participant-observation, interviewing and workshops as relevant methods to use. Bringing forth different metaphors was a way of appreciating a diversity of understandings about the research context. Bringing forth metaphors allowed these understandings to be analysed by a researcher. I proposed a framework for analysis, which considered which aspects the metaphor revealed and concealed about the research context. I then proposed three judgements that could clarify how these metaphors contributed to our understandings:

appropriate metaphors that can give rise to new understandings, *disabling* metaphors that subtract from this ability, and *alternative* metaphors which I can suggest based on my understandings of the research context, literature and theory.

In Chapter 5, I presented the first of three explorations of the research context. *Images of countrysides* was my narrative of the metaphors that were brought forth in the research, my analysis of these metaphors by using the framework, and my judgements as to appropriate, disabling and alternative metaphors. I clustered the large number of metaphors brought forth, in order to explore them, by using tables and diagrams.

In Chapter 6, I explored the *images of farming* brought forth during the research. Farming is one of the major activities within UK countrysides, and it provided a 'window' to understand the research context. Farming metaphors also *embody* different metaphors of countrysides. Exploring metaphors of farming was both a way to make this window transparent and also to *value* the farming families involved in the research.

In Chapter 7, I explored *images of FWAG* which was an institutional window on the research context. FWAG work with farmers and others concerned with future countrysides, and their mission to unite farming and conservation meant that FWAG occupied an interesting position with respect to countrysides. I concentrated on their 'ways of working', which was different from the focus on 'structure' that organisational studies have used metaphors to analyse.

In Chapter 8, I elaborated on the fourth response, and considered ways that metaphors can create a space for understandings to emerge. I proposed that researchers can use an awareness of metaphors to inform their activities, and I outlined how metaphors have been used in a range of fields. In order to create a space for understandings, I considered how *dialogue* could be facilitated through a joint, explicit and structured exploration of metaphors, which in turn could trigger different understandings of the research context.

In Chapter 9, I discussed two workshops in which metaphors were *jointly* brought forth and explored. These workshops were designed to empirically investigate whether metaphors can trigger dialogue, and hence whether space for understandings to emerge can be created or not. I chose workshops as being a suitable method for a joint exploration, because the emphasis is on exploring content and process in an experiential manner *with* a group of people.

One workshop was held with FWAG advisers, and the second with farming families.

In Chapter 10, I elaborated on the fifth response, and developed an approach for using metaphors in diverse stakeholder contexts. The approach "pulled together" the different responses to the thesis question, and combines the roles of researcher-narrator and researcher-facilitator into a joint project. I raised some issues regarding what it meant to move between metaphors, and how reified, dominant and favoured metaphors could inhibit this. The approach emerged from the research, but was not tested *per se*. I indicated some possible contexts in which the approach could inform research activities, based on my experiences.

11.2 Implications of the responses and how well my concerns were addressed

Soyland (1994: 158) claims that analysing rhetoric allows him to "*become more critical of ways in which arguments are constructed... (and he) takes less for granted*". One of the implications of my thesis is that I have provided a means, namely an awareness of metaphors, by which to become self-reflexive and responsible in my research. I have also provided a means by which researchers can appreciate a diversity of understandings: something often espoused but not so commonly practised. These are two important implications of my narrative for how research is conducted in a wide range of fields. I suggest that an awareness of metaphors has implications for teaching and 'practice' as well as for 'research'.

Further implications arise from my narrative because I developed ways to understand and use metaphors, not just be aware of them. I claim that metaphors have a valuable role in making understandings explicit, transparent and structured, although bringing forth does not rely on 'getting' underlying metaphors. Metaphors can be explored, either individually or jointly, and I claim that learning opportunities come from the exploration and awareness of alternative metaphors rather than from the metaphor *per se*. The framework of revealed and concealed aspects, as well as juxtaposing metaphors, are simple and effective ways of exploring understandings of a concept 'X'. I suggest that considering a range of metaphors, so that concealed aspects can be discussed, is therefore a necessary part of research that states an awareness of metaphors. My narrative also suggests that benefits can accrue from considering any description as a metaphor, as these can then be explored in a structured way.

These implications seem quite profound in terms of how research is, and could be, conducted. My initial concerns were with what research was trying to do, and how it was being conducted. I aimed to include people in the research, both myself and people involved in the research context. The narrative that I have developed goes part of the way in addressing those concerns, especially as appreciating and creating a diversity of understandings involves working with people. I am satisfied with the emphasis on developing relationships, and the methods and considerations that I discussed might be useful for other researchers considering how to interact with people. I am satisfied that FWAG advisers seemed to benefit from involvement in the research especially through their reflections on their ways of working and what they were doing. I am less satisfied with the benefits that I think farming families gained, as a lack of benefits acts against my attempts to make the research relevant by trying to work with people's understandings.

I proposed *countrysides* as a way of *situating* farming in a broader context. By including environmental and people issues, countrysides could also broaden the scope of agricultural research and enable reflection on farming practices. Enabling reflection is a part of creating a space for understandings to emerge. FWAG's endeavour for farming practices to be informed by environmental considerations, for example, could be very powerful if it is linked to a process that enables reflection amongst the people they are working with. Their endeavour moves away from a view that sees farming and conservation as separate activities to one of asking 'how can we change the way we farm?'. I have described how countrysides-as-polarised can also enable reflection on farming practices. Other metaphors can also do this. Hence one implication of an awareness of metaphors about countrysides is that it might enhance a reflection, by farming families, researchers and others, as to how farming can be situated in a broader context, and what sorts of farming practices are desirable.

However, I have left one crucial assumption unsubstantiated: that different countrysides can emerge from different ways of working. I commented in Chapter 10 that countrysides was just too broad to contemplate what sort of space might be created by a PhD researcher, even if this broadness might have helped me to develop the understanding of metaphors and how they can be used in research. The implication for further research is to be mindful of whether space can be created or not, and to be able to devise a way to check on whether the assumptions are constraining or not.

11.3 Questions arising and further research directions

I have mounted a coherent theoretical argument in the thesis as to how an awareness of metaphors might inform research in diverse stakeholder contexts. The main question that arises is 'what happens if my narrative does inform other research?' Another way of asking this question is 'can other people find this useful?' This was outside of the scope of this PhD, but maybe not for another research project. Some more plausible questions are 'whether the approach that I have developed is practical or not?' and 'what happens if other people jointly explore metaphors of the research context?' I propose that my exploration of the research context should be able to act as a source of metaphors for any other researchers: in the same way that I used the literature on countrysides as a source of metaphors. All of these questions imply that taking the research through a second iteration is a suitable direction for further research.

Some issues for further explication regard dominant and reified metaphors. I am still inclined to *deny* the possibility of dominant metaphors, by referring instead to an unwillingness or inability to consider alternative metaphors. That is, 'dominance' is a symptom of a 'constrained' way of thinking rather than whether a metaphor 'exists' more than other metaphors. I avoided claims that metaphors 'exist' separately of distinction by invoking bringing forth. However, acknowledging dominant metaphors might be a way of creating a space for change, as these can be discarded in the style that Sontag (1989) suggests. For example, 'dominant' metaphors can be listed, then symbolically 'crossed out'. Attention can then move to developing and exploring alternative metaphors. It could be that 'dominance' raises two separate issues: ontological claims as to whether dominant metaphors exist, and whether dominant metaphors can have utility. Both issues are suitable candidates for further research.

A different direction for further research concerns explicitly using metaphors to deconstruct¹ certain concepts in common use: those 'key' terms 'in currency'. Using metaphors highlights that these terms cannot be taken for granted nor assumed to have fixed meanings. In practical terms, this would suggest an

¹ 'Deconstruction' is used in a 'post-modernist' sense of 'exposing assumptions' (see Watson 1995: 135)

openness to question whether these concepts are intrinsically valuable or a justification to act in certain ways. Myerson and Rydin (1996) deconstruct "global warming" by focusing on aspects revealed and concealed (though they did not use this language). On the basis of this thesis, suitable candidates would include *network*, *stakeholder*, *systems*, and *participation*. In relation to countrysides, terms such as *multi-purpose*, *balance*, *sustainability*, and *diversity* could also benefit from an exploration using metaphors.

The reflections at the end of each chapter also provide a basis for proposing further research. One such reflection was about the judgements that I proposed to choose between metaphors. I saw the judgements as a way of contributing to the exploration of a research context using metaphors. However, the label 'disabling', for example, might act to constrain alternatives, and hence limit understandings of a research context. A second reflection was about 'dialogue', and whether I saw it as an attained state, a design feature or a process. A third is that the relationships between metaphors could be just as important a focus as on *individual* metaphors. All three of these reflections are worthy issues for further research.

11.4 Invoking metaphors for inspiration

I use a verb 'inspire' in the thesis question, to reflect how metaphors have inspired my research. However, is it *necessary* to invoke metaphors in order to address my primary concern of 'how to conduct research'?

For the purposes of 'creating a space for understandings to emerge', I can think of one alternative approach to that which I outlined in the thesis. I could have emphasised 'stories' and narratives more *explicitly*. Methods of bringing forth metaphors that I used revolved around stories, particularly participant-observation and interviewing. Emphasising stories can move research attention to 'giving a voice' to people who might not otherwise 'be heard' (Slim and Thompson 1993), which might also lead to different emergent understandings. Perhaps if I had more background in oral traditions, or if the culture that I belong to was not so dependent on writing, then I could have focused on stories. However, when I reflect on the *journey* that I have been on through this research, to switch metaphors, then it is *inspiration* that has carried me

through. My inspiration and creative energy have come from metaphors, not from stories or other aspects of my experiences, and the thesis reflects that.

What I hope to achieve in this thesis is to lay some groundwork for a dialogue regarding metaphors and researching *with* people. Metaphors *can* inspire researching with people, and this thesis has outlined how. It is only the start of a conversation, and I hope that I have inspired others to join in.

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Appendix 1 Using policies as windows to understanding the research context

This appendix supplements the exploration of farmers-as-implementors of policy (section 6.2.5). Three policies acted as windows to understanding farming and future countryside: Set-aside; Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). I explore these policies in terms of what aspects they reveal and conceal, which implies that these policies can be considered metaphorical. As such, the policies can be explored and discussed in quite different ways. A secondary reason for writing this appendix is to indicate how policy analysis and participatory research can both be considered as part of researching *with* people.

A1.1 Exploring three Countrysides policies

A1.1.1 SET-ASIDE

Set-aside was the topic for Workshops 3 and 4, and it also attracted a lot of comments during fieldwork. Set-aside has been superseded by the Arable Area Payments Scheme (AAPS) in 1992, but it was still generally referred to as set-aside. Set-aside was introduced in the late 1980's to take land out of production for a specified period of time (Mabey 1993). Taking land out of production was intended to decrease production and the surpluses that had been accumulating during the early 1980's. It was strongly linked to increasing budget pressures in the CAP. Set-aside is based on 'cross-compliance'.

When set-aside first came in (as a pilot scheme in 1989), it was very unpopular, with comments about 'feather-bedding', and 'money for nothing'. Some remnants of this was still apparent: "...don't like set-aside...as a farmer, always wanted to grow food... no satisfaction in producing today, because nobody wants it..." [e5]. It has also been criticised for its emphasis on curbing production rather than catering for environmental benefits, although some modifications (such as long term set-aside and non-rotational set-aside, and allowing tree planting) have acknowledged this.

Set-aside revealed business considerations: a reaction to set-aside was usually to "rationalise their fixed costs" [i13], or to "spread them by cropping more land" [i7].

In this way, it was seen to be benefiting the big farmer: "well a small man can't sack a labourer, can't dispose of a combine or tractor, the overheads stay basically the same. But the big boys, can put a large amount in set-aside, get rid of their labour of 20%, and their machinery overheads by 20%. And they are laughing all the way to the bank. It should be on a scale. And it is a social problem" [d9]. The social problem referred to the effects on labour requirements- less land to crop required fewer workers. One farmer said that 80% of farms are not in AAPS [g3], which raises questions about whether indeed set-aside is a distraction from other issues.

An aspect concealed by business considerations was the changes that had been made in set-aside could not be easily catered for: "...within three years, which is probably the minimum period that you could expect a business to make any major changes, set-aside has been cut by 33%. So by the time you've sacked your bloke... these scenarios change" [i13]. The area required to be set-aside (rotational set-aside) had been cut from 15% in 1994 to 12% in 1995 to 10% in 1996. It was these changes that led to an air of uncertainty about set-aside, and doubts that it would even be around in five years time [g11-19]. One very contentious point was that the decision to cut the set-aside area in 1995 had been announced after the crops had been sown.

A surprising amount of support for set-aside was found, mainly because it has given slack to a highly intensive system: "...set-aside is giving the slack in the system to allow conservation to be treated as an important end in itself" [e11, faxed comment]. For 'farming as production', the major positive effect was the slack in the system that allowed an improvement in farming techniques. Fallow for example, was an art that had been largely lost because of intensification [g8]. Slack in the system was most often referred to though as an improved timeliness of operations [e.g., g15], being able to perform operations that would not be possible if the land was covered by a crop (such as spraying, and ditching). Some farmers thought that giving slack was self-defeating: "... it does enable you to do the ditching... but these things in the long term only add to increased production" [i4]. Another farmer was "fetching out" land under a five year set-aside scheme, complaining that it would take a minimum of three years to get land back into full production [i6]. Timeliness of operations was not an advantage for him.

Set-aside both revealed and concealed aspects to do with possible environmental effects of set-aside. Some farmers (and FWAG) would: "... not support it, but if imposed, then try to make it a positive effect" [b1]. This included the "giving slack" perspective. However, it was also seen as distracting in that: "set-aside, nationally, is important, but the overriding importance is to look after the existing wildlife habitats, and to use set-aside to bolster those... And there is a great temptation to go in and talk about set-aside as if it is something that is going to solve all the problems, and neglect the key issues which are the long term habitats which are already there" [a1].

Under farming as production metaphors, the over-riding advantage of set-aside was seen to be in terms of 'timeliness of operations' [g15]. However, the biggest problem associated with set-aside was in terms of weed control: how to control weeds for the next crop [g14]. Restrictions were placed on dates that spraying could take place, which was seen to limit the effectiveness of set-aside both agronomically and from a wildlife point of view. Changes to some particularly harsh restrictions were welcomed. One such restriction was not being allowed to spray at all in the first year of the scheme and having to mow [g1]. This had a disastrous impact on nesting birds. The workshops on set-aside revealed many considerations relating to wildlife and habitat creation (see Chapter 7).

There were many schemes included under set-aside, such as: rotational, non-rotational, guaranteed, and flexible. This in itself was an element of confusion [g1]. Most of the comments unless indicated otherwise refers to rotational, or 'ordinary', set-aside. One farmer was about to join a 20 year scheme [c2], as that would be more beneficial for creating habitats. Farmers outlined different strategies for (rotational) set-aside. In the first years, the "worst land we can find" was put in [e7]. Set-aside in 1995 was paying approximately £325/ha, as compared to £550/ha Gross Margin for wheat on 'good' land [g1]. Hence which land to put in was generally decided on an opportunity cost basis. However, the ease at which a strategy could fit into farming systems was also an important part of choosing between set-aside schemes.

Transferable set-aside provides a clear indication of what countryside metaphors may be embodied by set-aside. Polarised countryside was one such metaphor. Transferable set-aside was introduced during 1995. It allows set-aside to be taken on areas other than on one particular farm- which was seen to give flexibility. A farmer, if s/he is on particularly 'productive' land, can buy or

lease land that is less productive, and continue farming unimpeded on the productive land. Transferable set-aside was seen to cut out marginal land, which was met with dread by one farmer: his whole area could go "back to 'scrub'" [e7]. One farmer argued that: "... it seems crazy to set aside land in {East Anglia}" [e6], which ignored the perspective of giving slack to an intensive system. The flexibility given by this scheme could also be seen to both enhance habitats [i13], and also give the potential to link valuable habitats [g1].

Some positive suggestions as to further changes in set-aside were discussed in the workshops. One was that set-aside needed another name (e.g. 'fallow') [g15], and especially long-term (non-rotational) set-aside was not 'set-aside' [e6]. This sounded cosmetic, but was related to the original perceptions of set-aside as 'money for nothing', and the public image of farming. Several farmers felt strongly that 20 metre strips of grassed set-aside was unworkable, but if it were 10 metres, then a lot more interest would be shown [g1, g11-19]. Farmers thought that it was perhaps only because the satellite could not monitor 10m that the restriction was 20m. This revealed aspects to do with monitoring, 'policing' and cross-compliance, and hence to metaphors of managed. It also contrasted with the increased need to monitor wildlife habitats. One suggestion regarding monitoring arose from another county, and that was to make it compulsory to have 2m strips around the edge of every field. Expensive satellite monitoring would not be needed, as local MAFF people could select some farms at random, and if the 2m strip wasn't there, then action could be taken [b3]. Whether this suggestion is workable is one thing, but it demonstrated that farmers considered *both* policy reform and individual learning. One further suggestion was that payments should be 'scaled', so that support dropped as acreage increased [d9].

Set-aside could be seen to have concealed metaphors of countrysides, due to uncertainty about changes, and whether it would remain a policy tool for much longer. However, the extent that set-aside attracted discussion suggested otherwise. Farming-as-production, and countrysides-as-polarised appear to have been embodied by set-aside. Set-aside reified farmers-as-implementors of policy, especially with cross-compliance. However, the host of management options discussed in the workshops implied some autonomy and hence a limitation to this metaphor. The next two policies demonstrate this more clearly, as these were voluntary schemes. The next two schemes more easily revealed environmental considerations.

A1.1.2 COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP (CS)

Countryside Stewardship (CS) applies to England, and was launched in 1991 by the Countryside Commission to encourage conservation and public access over certain kinds of farmland (Mabey 1993). It offered incentive payments to manage or recreate landscapes particularly valued by the public, whilst at the same time providing access to the public (*ibid.*, p39-40, quoting from the 1990 White Paper on the Environment). In its first year CS targeted five landscape and wildlife habitats: chalk and limestone grassland, lowland heath, waterside landscapes, coastal land and uplands. In the second year, two more were added: historic landscapes and meadow and pasture. Capital grants were also given, to fund advice and preparation of the agreements (*ibid.*, p40). CS involves entering into a ten year management agreement. This agreement is seen as flexible, and even though the ten years was "supposed to give security" [h1], many farmers saw the ten years as a bind as business opportunities would be restricted if there were any changes (in policies or markets) [e.g., e6].

Countryside Stewardship (CS), formerly administered by the Countryside Commission, was seen as putting stewardship principles into practice. CS revealed aspects to do with farmers' autonomy, as it was a voluntary scheme, relying on positive incentives. It also featured ten year management agreements. FWAG were involved in the preparation of some of these agreements, and three farmers (two in Buckinghamshire, and one in Suffolk) were directly involved in CS schemes. One aspect concealed was that CS's effect on farming and countrysides was in practice very limited, largely because of the low numbers of farms and agreements. CS also concealed that the targeting approach was only partial.

CS was usually mentioned in a positive light: "stewardship, is the first scheme to reward farmers for positive things, and NOT compensation for income foregone (as other schemes were). If the latter, then (it) could promote the thought, what damage would get the maximum compensation?" [e6]. However, one farmer [e3] was so impressed that he ran a third field as if it was in CS, even without the benefits of CS payments. The main changes to his practices were not spreading fertiliser (and enriching the pastures), and the timing of grazing. He also approved of attempts to link other farmers in his valley to CS.

The targeting of the scheme concealed that it was only partial in three ways (see Bishop and Phillips 1993). The first was that it only applied to certain landscape types. The second was that the areas covered might not be areas in

'demand', either because they had a high level of access anyway, or they were considered inaccessible. Further, there was a lack of publicity about new areas of access. The third was that the agreement only covered the area in stewardship, and not the whole farm. This could lead to intensification on the rest of the farm (and by implication, a polarisation of countryside). This issue is addressed in Appendix two, as FWAG promoted whole farm approaches. A related scheme in Wales, Tir Cymen, differed from CS in three respects, and hence showed what the targeting of CS concealed. Agreements did cover the whole farm, and it only applied to farms (CS was in theory open to any individual or organisation responsible for managing land within the landscape). It also applied to geographical areas rather than landscape types.

CS was transferred to MAFF in 1996 (Anon. 1994; 1995). The observation is also made that spending by MAFF for environmental schemes is projected to be 100 Million Pounds by 1996, which represents less than five percent of agricultural spending¹. The limited budget and landscape types were seen to reduce its efficacy (Webster and Felton 1993). This led to a major criticism of CS, that it was limited. After three years, nationally it covered 80174 ha, and 3894 agreements have been signed (Anon. 1994). On a local level, this was minor. For example, in Buckinghamshire, there were only 54 agreements in the first four years of the scheme, and most of these were areas beside watercourses and not necessarily farmed. One person confirmed that it was "wrong to boast they are making an impact on the environment" [e14, CoCo]. However, the scheme was only a pilot, and it was "only scratching the surface, given funding (it) could do a lot more" [e14]. As a pilot, CS aimed to clarify whether: it was better to get environmental benefits from land management; to test management agreements as a mechanism; and also whether a menu approach to payments (land management and capital grants) was appropriate. However, compared to the scale of agricultural price support, it seems quite insignificant.

CS was also criticised because of lack of monitoring and evaluation. Bishop and Phillips (1993: 45) identify that there has been no publicised evaluation on effectiveness of CS, but that it appears well received.

¹ An extra 50 Million Pounds was allocated to CS in the 1996 budget

The next policy to be discussed is that of ESAs. It too was seen as insignificant. The main difference between ESAs and CS as far as Bishop and Phillips (1993) are concerned, was that CS was a market-led approach. Payment is not for the process (as with ESAs) but for the product (*ibid.*, 335). Concentrating on a product allowed production at cheapest cost, and also for managerial and entrepreneurial flair. CS also allowed a discretionary scope to the authorities in whether to accept applications, which was an aspect concealed by metaphors of farmers being autonomous.

A1.1.3 ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS (ESAS)

This third policy was well expounded in the literature, but less so by participants during fieldwork. Some aspects revealed and concealed are similar to those discussed under CS. In addition, ESAs revealed aspects of designations, and also how MAFF's protocol had been changing. It also revealed an emphasis on maintaining 'traditional' countrysides, that were only implicit in the stewardship component of CS. ESAs did not affect any of the farmers in this research, and FWAG were not involved in advice regarding ESAs. Hence it gave the impression that it was also quite insignificant in farming decisions, especially in the 'lowland' areas of the UK.

ESAs are a UK response to an EU directive which "... *designate(d) areas where the maintenance or adoption of particular methods is likely to facilitate (the) conservation, enhancement or protection of the nature conservation, amenity or archaeological and historical interest of an area.... give financial incentives to encourage appropriate farming practices in these ESA's*" (Blunden and Curry 1988: 175) . This EU directive (797/85, Article 19) provided the opportunity for the UK government to launch the ESA policy in 1986, following the 1986 Agricultural Act (Froud 1994). The first payments under the scheme began in 1987. ESAs were seen as a fundamental shift in policy for that time (Bishop and Phillips 1993). Along with the calls by conservationists, 'compensation' was rejected in favour of payments to undertake positive environmental benefits (see Mabey 1993; Bishop and Phillips 1993). It was also seen as "...*the first attempt by MAFF to explicitly include environmental objectives into an agricultural policy*" (Froud 1994: 117), and the first time that MAFF was responsible for a protected area rather than DoE (Baldock *et al.* 1990).

Froud (1994) outlines how ESAs were projected to cover 2.2 million ha in 1993, which represent 13% of agricultural land in the UK. This does not give

any indication to how many agreements have been taken up, though. ESAs involved designating areas of land, which Body (1987) argued that drawing a line across a map was too arbitrary. Body argued that all of UK should be an ESA, which was seen by Carter (1989a,b) as being attractive, but is just too expensive. ESAs were also seen to have different effects in the upland areas, where "the whole social structure is held together by ESA grants, otherwise the area wouldn't be farmed"; whereas in lowland areas it was more "marginal" [h1]. ESAs were seen as marginal because lowland areas had a more "diverse rural economy" that was less dependent on agriculture [h5]. This point implies that ESAs can be a window to rural community metaphors.

With ESAs, Froud (1994) outlines how farmers enter into a contract to manage their land according to prescriptions and payments contained in schemes. These agreements were initially for five years, but now stand at ten years. ESAs generally focus on maintaining (or reintroducing) traditional extensive livestock grazing systems. In most ESAs there are a number of tiers, the lower tiers aimed at "... *maintaining a traditional grassland landscape with restrictions on fertiliser and herbicide use, field cultivations and drainage and in some cases stocking rates and hay/silage dates*" (*ibid.*, p108). Higher tiers aim at creation or reversion to grazing systems, with corresponding higher payments. This embodies a "traditional" components of stewardship metaphors. Froud (1994) outlined how in some cases there has only been a minor impact on farming practices and composition of output (Froud 1994), which suggested that ESAs conceal practical issues. Baldock *et al.* (1990: 157) have concluded that the ESA programme remains "... *a minor though well publicised aspect of policy*".

Appendix 2 A sample letter set to English FWAG advisers, inviting participation in Workshop 5



Systems Department
Faculty of Technology
The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

Systems Department

Telephone (0908) 654091
Fax (0908) 652175
d.mcclintock@open.ac.uk

23rd of October, 1995

Dear

I am writing to invite you to participate in a one day workshop to explore how future countrysides can come about. For those who have not yet met me, I am an Australian with a farming background, and I am conducting research for a PhD at the Open University (based in Milton Keynes). This PhD research is about 'future countrysides' and farming, and also about how researchers can work *with* people. As part of my research, I have been talking with some FWAG advisers during the past 18 months. My research is in its final stages but I feel you are in a position to further contribute to this research.

A workshop will be held here at Walton Hall in Milton Keynes, on Saturday the 18th of November. This workshop will run from 10am to 4:30pm and will include refreshments. I will use the rest of this letter to explain what this workshop is about, and how it fits into my research. Because of the time constraints under which we all operate, I hope to call you early next week to see if you are interested and able to come. I can then send you further details after this call. For those travelling a long way, I may be able to provide accommodation at Stony Stratford. I would also like to discuss the issue of travelling costs when I call.

The general aims of the workshop are to explore how we think about farming and countrysides. One central idea of Systems, which informs my work, is that to break out of traps we often have to develop new ways of thinking. Working with 'images' and ways of describing may be one way to develop new ways of thinking. Different sorts of 'future countrysides' can emerge from different

images that we hold. Thus, what are our images of 'farming', 'countrysides', and within this, 'FWAG adviser's roles and ways of working'? This is not so broad as to mean 'anything and everything'. During the past 18 months in my research with FWAG advisers and farmers, I have come across many different perspectives. For example, some diverse images that I have heard to describe FWAG are: advising, informing, educating, encouraging, and uniting. There are many others. What I would like to do is to talk about your perspectives, other perspectives that I have heard, and see whether by discussing what each image implies there are chances for learning about 'what it is that we do or might do as FWAG advisers'. I have said 'talk' and 'discuss'- whereas I should say that part of a workshop is 'doing'. I do think that we learn by doing, hence there will be different activities in the workshop.

This workshop could be of benefit to you as FWAG advisers for three reasons. One is that part of your activities involves working with groups, and you may get some ideas as to different ways of conducting meetings and workshops. A second is that part of FWAG's 'new' product apparently includes 'farmer's visions'. I don't think that you can hope to simply ask a farmer "what is your vision?". I am trying to work with 'images' and 'ways of understanding'. You may get some ideas from participating in a workshop. The third reason, the most important, is that working with other FWAG advisers creates an opportunity to learn. I think that we are so busy 'doing' things that we rarely make the time to examine 'is it a good thing, could I do it better, and how are some other people approaching similar issues?' Hence I will be doing my utmost to ensure that there are opportunities for learning from each other.

I hope that plans for the workshop are clear. I am happy to elaborate, but I didn't want to make this letter too long or detailed. My research on future countrysides, and developing ways of working WITH people, would really benefit from your participation. I would hope that you would get something out of it as well. When I speak to you next week, I should be able to provide a more precise programme (when I have ascertained numbers).

I hope that your work is going well. I am looking forward to speaking with you.

With very best wishes,

David McClintock

Appendix 3 Suggested programme for Workshop 5

9:45-10:15: arrival, coffee

10:15- 10:45 introduction (important distinctions, warm-up activity)

10:45-11:45 topic one: perspectives on countrysides.

{ via 'concept sorting', in pairs }

11:45-12:30 discussion- what perspectives imply. Also reactions

to some perspectives that I have heard

12:30-1:15 lunch { provided }

1:15-1:30 insights from topic one, and discussion

1:30-2:30 topic 2: 'farming', and what descriptions imply for

farmers and countrysides

2:30-3:00 break, walk around the river { weather dependent }, tea/coffee

3:00-4:00 topic 3: 'FWAG adviser roles', and discussion

4:00-4:30 how could what we've discussed today be applied; general

comments on this workshop; and invitation for a social drink/meal

(These times are only meant as a guide, and to help me think about how to design this workshop. It is possible that the topics will blend into each other).

Appendix 4 Examples of joint explorations of metaphors in Workshops 5 and 6: the 'metaphor workshops'

In this appendix, I present three diagrams that display some of the content of the joint explorations in the two metaphor workshops. An additional diagram, my compilation of "education", is presented in Chapter 5. The three diagrams are:

- "Countrysides-as-working": diagram generated during Workshop 5 (FWAG advisers) (Figure A4.1);
- "Countrysides-as-managed" *and* "countrysides-as-arising from economic pressures": modified from a flip chart poster generated during Workshop 6 (farming families) (Figure A4.2); and
- "Countrysides-as-a-tapestry": my compilation of comments from Workshops 5 and 6 (FWAG advisers and farming families) (Figure A4.2).

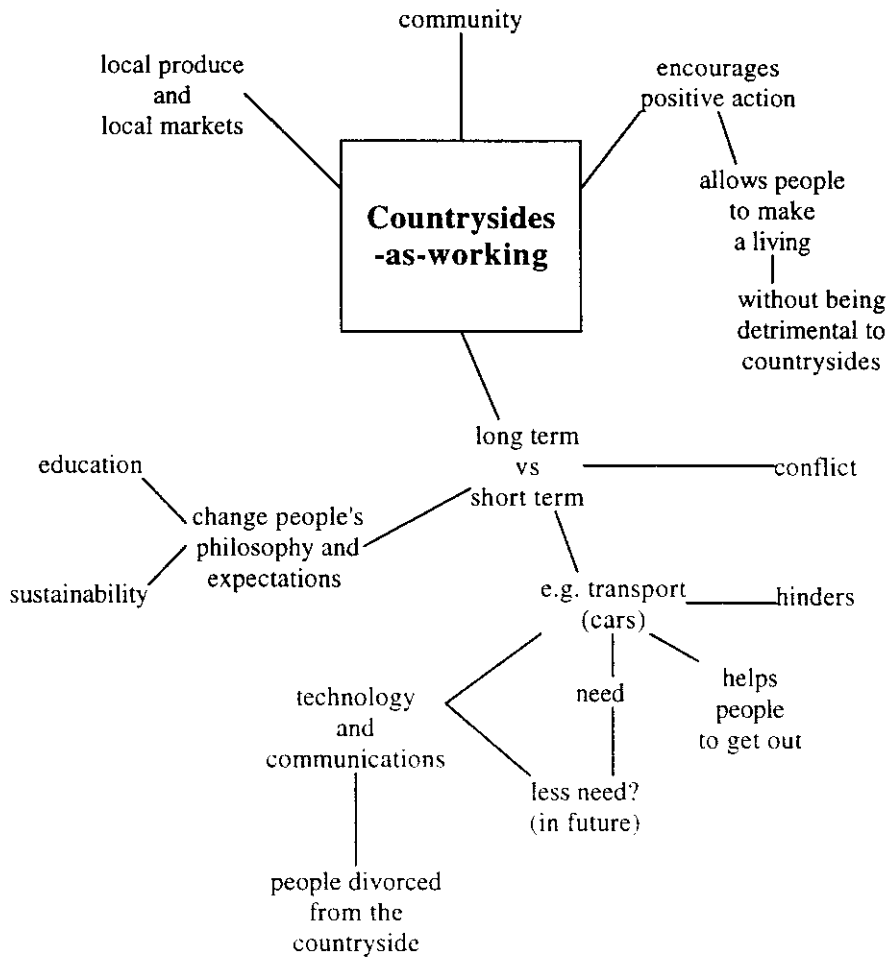


Figure A4.1 "Countrysides-as-working": diagram generated during Workshop 5 (FWAG advisers)

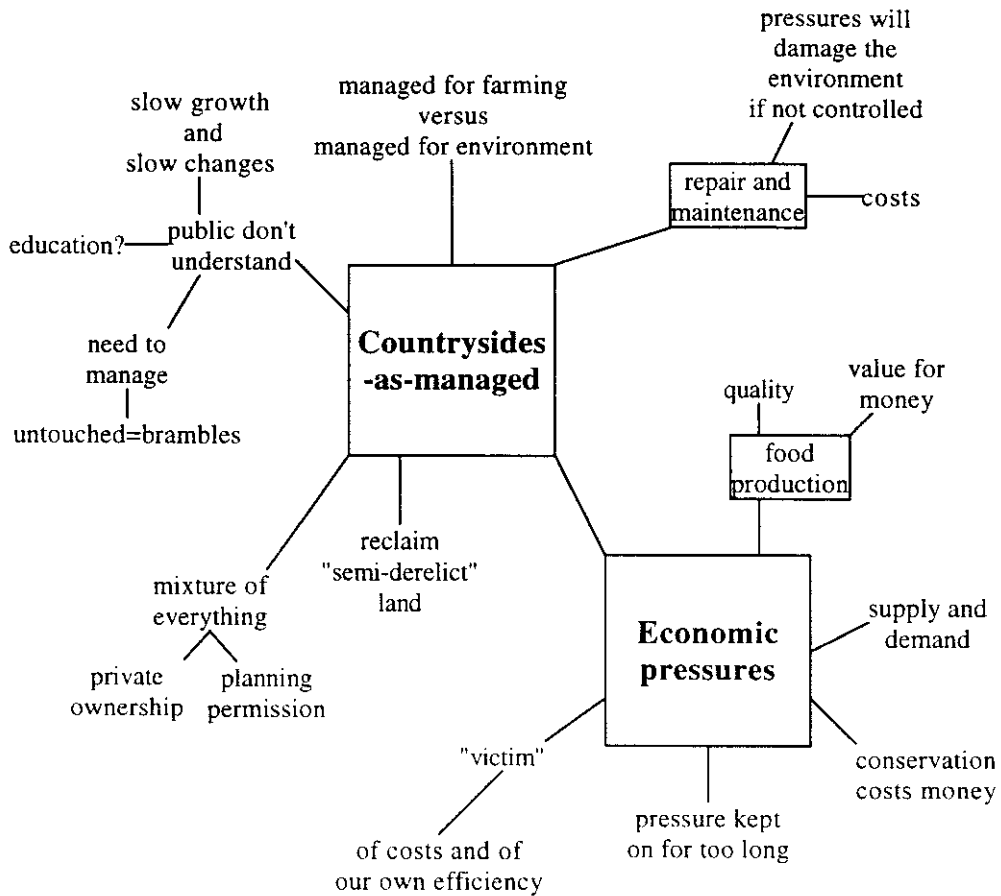


Figure A4.2 "Countrysides-as-managed" and "countrysides-as-arising from economic pressures": modified from a flip-chart poster generated during Workshop 6 (farming families)

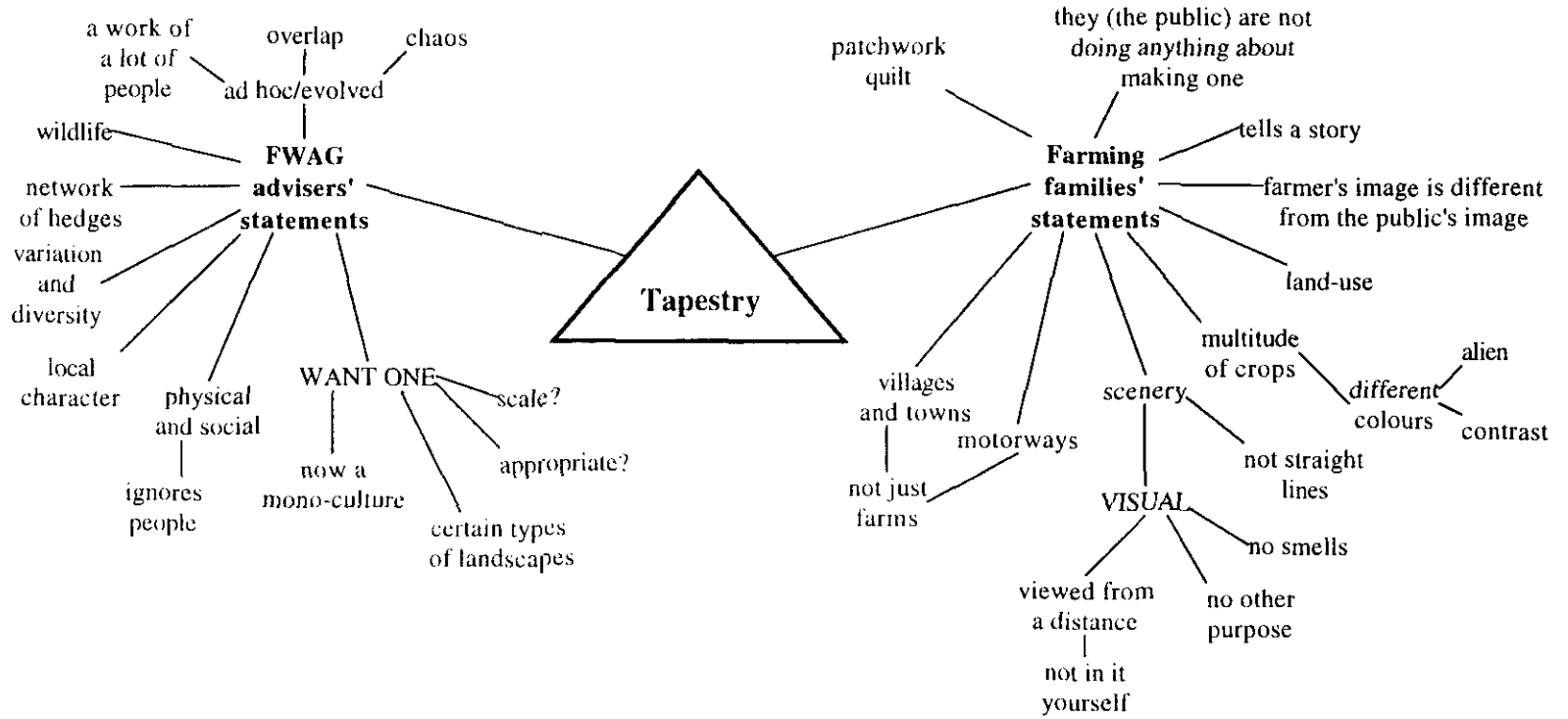


Figure A4.3 "Countrysides-as-a tapestry": my compilation of comments from Workshops 5 and 6 (FWAG advisers and farming families)