
Weaving Regenerative Metaphors

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Résumé

Whilst the term ‘regenerative’ has been applied to definitions, principles and practices of regenerative agriculture, (Newton, 2020) in recent years it is being increasingly applied to other contexts such as leadership, culture, design and education. There are no detailed studies which analyse the metaphors and narratives which express and underpin the emergent and growing use of the term regenerative within a business context. My current PhD research project is applying ecolinguistics techniques to explore the use of this term within a professional business context, to further the understanding of what is meant by the term, who is using it, and how it can potentially influence business practices and decision making. The research methods of my project seek to understand how Ecolinguistics approaches can contribute to transformational change. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) propose, “much of culture change arises from the introduction of new metaphorical concepts and the loss of old ones.” Bohm (1990) says, “a change of meaning, is a change of being.” Within the narratives revealed, my research specifically seeks to reveal metaphors, frames and entailments, as linguistic tools that have ‘the power to create a new reality.’ (Lakoff, Johnson, 1980). The change required is both at an individual and social level and therefore, the research also uses the concept of ecocultural identity (Carr, Milstein 2020, Stibbe 2020) to investigate how regenerative metaphors contribute to a change in identity towards more ecologically beneficial behaviour.

This two hour session comprises a workshop and a Clean Language Lab. The workshop will present a ‘metaphorical landscape’ in the form of an interactive card deck, that could potentially be understood as a framework for regenerative business practice or simply expressed as ‘new metaphors to live by.’ The research does not assume any one discourse amongst regenerative practitioners, acknowledging that meaning and context potentially give rise to multiple discourses. The use of a card deck allows for the creation of individual and shared meaning, dynamic interaction and dialogue amongst workshop participants and acknowledges, and makes accessible, the many complex threads within regenerative discourse and action.

The research approach is interdisciplinary in nature, and seeks to use Ecolinguistics, Econarrative, Ecocultural Identity, Clean Language, Phenomenology, Autoethnography and Visual Arts Practice, to be able to present metaphors for regeneration that do not require agreed definitions, but rather reflect the shared narratives and values of regenerative practitioners, and helps to promote ecologically beneficial practices.

Following the group workshop, a ‘Clean Language Lab’ using the Clean Language methodology will be offered for individuals to creatively explore a regenerative metaphor of most interest or resonance to them, in support of their ecocultural identity. This will involve

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myself asking each individual the 12 questions of the Clean Language method, whilst I listen and sketch in response to their answers, followed by a reflective discussion. An example of a Clean Language workshop I have designed and facilitated can be found here - <https://www.creatingmeaning.club/vessels>

Mots-Clés: metaphor, regenerative