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Accounting Conceptual Frameworks and Metaphors of Vision

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the research was to analyze the evolving particularly subconscious conceptual metaphor in Western society: *Vision as Knowledge* amidst the post-modern turn. This is done in a selection of accounting conceptual frameworks from 1978 to 2015. The motivation for analysis was first to discover what visual knowledge was like in accounting conceptual frameworks. Vision is a metaphor that functions largely unrecognizably in accounting, as well as other, discourse (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999, Sweetser, 1990, Gibbs, 2017). By isolating these sunk vision metaphors, the thesis attempted to see if the metaphor, *vision as objective knowledge*, had altered amidst the postmodern turn. Since the research approach here is a corpus analysis of submerged vision metaphors in conceptual frameworks, the methodology employed sought to isolate, select, and categorize vision metaphors in a longitudinal study of conceptual frameworks over the periods of 1978 to 2015.

The thesis's contribution concerns the submerged character of vision metaphor that pervades everyday language. Vision is largely unrecognizable as a metaphor for conceptualizing objective knowledge in Western society. And so, in order to understand vision metaphor's transition from modernity to postmodernity and what this may mean in relation to accounting knowledge, a method is used to extract vision metaphors. A method is developed to study vision periodically in order to study how accounting regulation has evolved metaphorically over the last few decades. The results from the thesis demonstrates that vision as knowledge is conceptualized differently over time in accounting conceptual frameworks. From an absolute viewing perspective concerning the mind (*Vision as Mind*) where primacy is attributed to the intellect, to a much more embodied, human, situated perspective, the thesis informs the construction of vision as knowledge in terms of the body (*Vision as Body*). What the implications of this shift may mean for accounting is discussed later in the thesis.

The thesis follows a conventional structure. It begins with a review of the accounting literature, followed by a theoretical overview, and an exploration of the empirical site that is chosen for such an analysis. A methodology and methods chapter follows, and then finally a key findings and related discussion chapter is provided. To recapitulate, the main aim of the thesis is to understand the transformation of the *Vision as Knowledge* metaphor over the period of conceptual frameworks chosen in this study. The main findings from the thesis is that the *Vision as Knowledge* metaphor has typological frames in accounting conceptual frameworks, which shows the gradual deconstruction of a strong representational mode of thinking in accounting regulation overall.

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DECLARATION

"I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution."

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Signature: <u>   </u>

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHOD

1.0 INTRODUCTION: ACCOUNTING AND VISION METAPHOR

> "Even a rapid glance at the language we commonly use will demonstrate the ubiquity of visual metaphors. If we actively focus our attention on them, vigilantly keeping an eye out for those deeply embedded as well as those on the surface, we can gain an illuminating insight into the complex mirroring of perception and language."

(Jay, 1993, p. 1)

A trope is probably the easiest way to open this thesis. Accounting is like looking through a windowpane onto a world. The world exists outside awaiting representation. Accounting functions as a *glassy substance*, one that *reflects* the features of a socially produced world. Where accounting concepts are modelled on or reflect real financial facts, accounting modelling is *lens-like*. Where accounting offers the correct amount of *clarity* for a user of accounting information to *see* what is going on, accounting rules aim to allow sufficient *light* to pass through, constructing an accurate *image* of the corporation.

Vision is an important metaphor for accounting. Ruth Hines explained this window analogy in financial accounting as the "common sense attitude". One that "depends on the taken-for-granted assumption that perceptions give direct access to objects and events" (Hines, 1991, p. 317). Accounting concepts offer accurate descriptions of socially produced real world events. Accounting functions similar to literal, scientific, representations, where "normal" – propositionally accurate literal language – should be the basis of its rules. Accounting should provide accurate, maximally informative images of corporate activity.

The aim of the thesis seeks examination of vision metaphor in the context of "normal" accounting regulatory discourse (accounting conceptual frameworks). The aim is to see whether vision metaphors evolve over time, and more precisely, what they mean in connection to financial accounting objectivity and knowledge. It is also to see whether accounting concepts seek to re-present reality in similarly metaphorical way, where accounting rules represent or map ontologically subjective socially created phenomena. It is the motivation of the thesis to study the evolution of vision metaphors in order to analyze how accounting regulation functions. The thesis attempts to understand whether a scientific, visual conception of knowledge still holds. By corresponding its rules to real economic phenomena, accounting regulation, that is, accounting conceptual frameworks, have

conformed to a modernist conception of knowledge and objectivity. Vision is herein understood in terms of the following: accounting rules build an accurate picture of economic events (Mouck, 2004)[1]. The thesis' hunch is that the visual potential of accounting and the processes of transparency, light, clarity – accounting rules - slowly begin to de-construct.

Therefore, the importance of this study is to understand how this vision is understood as following a trajectory from the modern to a postmodern; that is deeply part of the way we socially/collectively experience our world. It is presumed from the outset, that the world has an impact on bodies, cognition and conceptual structures (Lakoff, 1987, Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, Clark, 1997). And so, it is assumed that vision, this ideal of looking through the glass of a financial report, can no longer be automatically presumed, over time. With critical accounting scholars demonstrating the inability of accounting to build accurate representations or images of organizations, vision metaphors are studied longitudinally to analyze if change has occurred. And with that, what kind of conception of accounting knowledge and objectivity there is; if indeed there is one.

An important point to stress is that vision is a significant underlying metaphor within the structure of epistemology (Rorty, 1979, Levin, 1994, Jay, 1994). For the thesis, vision functions in a less than overt, visible, obvious, even conscious way. Vision is hidden in the structuring of everyday language and thought (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999). In other words, vision is submerged within "normal" presumed literal language (Sweetser, 1990, Leder, 1994, Gibbs, 2017). More specifically, vision is not so easily recognizable on the exterior of language, remaining automatic and unconscious. Thus, studying vision metaphor, not as an overt metaphor that is easily recognizable, but as a buried submerged part of the construction of ordinary language, can demonstrate the development of evolutionary meaning of objective knowledge within accounting regulation. And this is the thesis's focus: to study the nuanced way in which vision metaphor appears in accounting discourse, and how vision conceptualizes ideas about what objective accounting knowledge is.

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[1] This is the view Mouck (2004, p. 533) expresses, "In this sense, the rules of financial accounting have much in common with the rules of painting as promulgated by the Renaissance writer Leon Battista Alberti. As pointed out by Crosby (1997, pp. 183–186), the perspectivist approach to painting (also referred to as construzione legittima) combined the ancient Greek theory of optics with Ptolemy's approach to cartography (i.e. the use of a gridwork of coordinates, now familiar to us as lines of longitude and latitude) to produce what came to be known as ''realistic'' pictures of the visual world."

1.1 THESIS' FOCUS: VISION METAPHOR

The thesis began by considering how vision functions in accounting regulation. Vision, it is assumed, is a deeply submerged conceptual metaphor for objective knowledge (See Gibbs, 2017). Hannah Arendt observed that "from the very outset, thinking has been thought of in terms of seeing" (1978, p. 110). And so, the thesis assumes that a knower relates to the known world through vision as conventional/normal - the way knowledge is normally done. The subject gets *outside* to the assumed features of the real thing, attempting to reflect the core, qualitative features of the other object. And to know the other well assumes that there are features to be known. The subject's vision conforms to the feature of object's qualities, where a passive viewing distance from that object provides factual, accurate re-presentations of the intrinsic features of phenomena in the receiver's mind. The mind functions, like a sort of reflecting surface, a mirror where the mind is largely a passive receiver of phenomena. Knowledge derives from the eyes looking *outside* onto the external social world. The idea here is that this conception of vision alters. Vision, its frailty, demonstrates the instability in the assuredness of accounting knowledge and objectivity.

As a consequence, the method employed in the thesis is done in such a way in order to extract vision metaphors, so as to explore their evolution. Which is to say that the method was informed by the view that vision is a submerged metaphor that is rooted deep within accounting language. And is assumed to evolve in parallel with changes within ourselves and our world, as subjects and objects reciprocally influence one another. Metaphor, according to the thesis, derives from a deeper, body-world engagement - a causal account of metaphor. Which develops from a more critical view of the literature, where metaphors are assumed to derive from cultural subjects specifically, by way of naming, using rhetorical strategies, subterfuge or exercising power in order to justify on behalf of reason. By studying vision in the former way, as an outcome of a deeper body-world relation, vision can help us understand the importance of the evolving meanings of objectivity and knowledge, and reason; through an understanding of metaphor as an outcome of this reciprocal body-world relation, rather than a subjectively imposed human strategy to enact power over entities via linguistic authority.

Overall, *Vision as Knowledge* has been denigrated (Jay, 1994) from this assumed power perspective. Vision is connected to hegemonic power and authoritative control (Levin, 1993), as the master sense of the modern era (Jay, 1988, p. 3-23). Distance, disengagement, passivity, masculinity, voyeurism, indifference, sovereignty aggressiveness, violence et al.

are all condemnations of vision as a form of knowing that is reduced to a "single point of view" (Jay, 1988, p.7). Similarly, the accounting literature, through taking various postmodern, discursive, and hermeneutic positions which feature the idea of accounting as a creative language, attempts to challenge this hegemony through this assumption of language as reality. Where language at best is a flimsy, replaceable, dispensable, out of touch human device, in terms of reflecting reality. By assuming vision other than a unitary, singular concept connected with disengaged rational observation that pertains to masculine dominance, the approach taken in the thesis has been developed differently: that vision simply evolves. In order to convey a more nuanced understanding of the vision metaphor it is understood that vision is part of a broader, philosophical nuanced debate that begs larger questions about the nature of literal language, science, objectivity and knowledge in financial accounting. A longitudinal study of vision metaphors, therefore, is adopted in order to understand the evolutionary significance of change in the evolving development of objectivity and knowledge or more succinctly, objective knowledge. And in order to develop an analysis of objective, value free, scientific pursuit of knowledge in accounting conceptual frameworks, the thesis attempts to understand the evolving nature of vision.

1.2 VISION: EXPLAINING THE METAPHOR'S EVOLVING CHARACTER

It is normally presumed that vision implies a fixed, passive, inactive, objective, even literal representational approach towards knowing the world (See Johnson, 2007, 2017). Notions of distance, disinterestedness, coldness, even belligerence in the approach towards knowing another, are pervasive in thinking about objective knowledge (Levin, 1993). Ob-ject basically means to throw out the body (Hetherington, 1999), and value the mind as a representational instrument, that seeks a good image of the outside world as a form of knowledge.

However, this type of vision as a modernist all seeing, all-powerful gaze cannot hold out (Jay, 1994). That is, it is seen here that such a position is resisted from an embodied methodological position taken in the thesis. In other words, it is demonstrated that there are other visual regimes (Jay, 1994) that does not require an all seeing, all knowing, even literal representation. As we move from modernity to postmodernity, vision is unable to be generalized in terms of disinterestedness, power, the subject gaze, essences and absolute truth. To understand vision is to understand, "how ineluctable the modality of the visual actually is" (Jay, 1994, p.1, see also, Crary, 1990). As a result, the thesis develops an embodied-cognitive methodological approach in order to understand the often taken for

granted understanding of vision as a metaphor that is commonly connected to the subject position: power, dogma and disinterestedness. All themes that are argued outmoded in relation to knowledge and objectivity today.

The research in this thesis seeks to explore vision metaphors in accounting discourse, and it is in my view, that a study of vision would benefit an understanding of differing conceptions of accounting knowledge and objectivity. Conceptions that can be unconnected to the view of accounting as an abstract, passive gaze onto presence. And one which would benefit from a further and deeper analysis of the evolution of this metaphor in an accounting linguistic context. It is felt, to go beyond analyzing overt, rhetorical instances of metaphor studies, vision must be understood as fluid, changing and evolving, and most importantly for the contribution of the thesis, as a rather submerged/unconscious concept. This is not only in order to understand the treatment of vision metaphors and the varied nuances they appear to have in accounting regulatory language, but also for me to understand the evolutionary nature of meaning within conceptual frameworks; especially when frameworks communicate through vision metaphors the presented meaning of accounting objectivity and knowledge.

Therefore, the thesis theorizing is informed by scholars who explain change in vision, knowledge and objectivity through time. Allan Megill, a historian of philosophy, is one such scholar who offers up an insightful explanation of change in four descriptive ways. Megill focuses specifically on objectivity, and how the sense of its meaning has changed over time. Megill offers four *senses* of objectivity: The Absolute, Disciplinary, Dialectical and Procedural senses of objectivity. Where knowledge and objectivity connect to the hegemonic assumptions of modernity (See Levin, 1993), conceptions of objectivity, knowledge, subjectivity, meaning, and experience is assumed here to be multifaceted, plural and in continuous flux. Since concepts of objectivity, linked to concepts of knowledge and vision are assumed structural, the research attempts to extract these vision metaphors that are buried deep throughout corpora (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). Since vision is normally associated with Western conceptions of knowledge as cognitivist, objectivist, value free, distant, and passive, the research aim is not only to discover and analyze vision metaphors, but also, to make a modest methodological contribution. That is, to develop a method for obtaining such buried, vision metaphors within accounting text. The results from the method are given in chapter six, to show the changing and altering nature of *Vision as Objective Knowledge* (See Sweetser, 1990); and to explain variability in this *Vision as Knowledge* metaphor that accounting conceptual frameworks demonstrates.

1.3 HYPOTHESIS: VISION AS A SUBMERGED METAPHOR FOR OBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

It is hypothesized that the *Vision as Knowledge* metaphor*,* like Megill's explanation of objectivity, and for those who espouse ontological political views (Law and Mol, 1999, Mol, 2002, Urry, 2000, Law and Urry, 2004) retains its presence in conceptual frameworks. Yet there is something different about what it means over time. And this is due to the way practices relate to objects in different places and different times. That is, *Vision as Knowledge,* like Megill's varied yet interconnected explanation of objectivity*,* is not read off or conceptually complete. In other words, it cannot be a fixed, definitive concept, detached from time, circumstance and history. In other words, it evolves by a process of social change informed through the way human beings interact or engage with and respond to, changes in their experiences to life-worlds, which they share and come to, hopefully, reasonable outcomes.

To expand on this view, *Vision is Knowledge* is metaphorical, but most importantly for the thesis, submerged. Vision appears non-deliberately in discourse and is part of a deeper relationship between body and world (Sweetser, 1990, Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999, Johnson, 2017, Gibbs, 2017). But it also lodged within a hegemony of Western epistemology (Levin, 1993). And so, it is hypothesized that the modern, a-temporal, disembodied, disconnected and hegemonic notion of "vision of modernity" (see Levin, 1993) requires a research approach that assumes relationships exist between body and the technological advance of the postmodern world (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, Johnson, 2017). In other words, vision will be responsive to body-world evolution over time (Clark, 1997, Evans and Green, 2006), of working with others and other technologies, other than assuming a human subject in sole, absolute control, working independently of that lived world.

Therefore, it is the view of the thesis that metaphor is an outcome of the way bodies interact with environments (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, Lakoff, 1987, Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). Tropes are not so easily controllable, nor are they subjected to conscious choice: "tropes as deliberate departures from standard usage" (Pinder and Bourgeios, 1983, p. 610). Metaphors are normally presumed to sit comfortably on the surface of language (Deignan, 2005) to be seen, to be directly accessible, interpretable and changeable. A common view of metaphors is that they are novel, clear, cut and dried parts of discourse or speech that are easily identifiable. And so, the research aims, in spite of this, to seek non-deliberate vision metaphors.

The thesis, on the other hand, sees metaphors as an entrenched part of meaning/of language, which arises out of a profound contact between embodied experiences and the shared world. The view in the thesis is that metaphors are rather *outcomes*, where metaphors are buried and deep in thought and language because of the bodies we have, and the worlds we share. It is understood that by and large, vision metaphors are non-overt, and remain largely unseen in the development of accounting regulatory discourse. And are, for this reason most probably, underexplored in the accounting literature. The thesis views vision as one such non-overt metaphor. One that resides deep within the presumed objectivity of accounting regulatory discourse. As a result, this view of metaphor influences the research methods employed in the thesis, which demonstrates a way to extract more submerged vision metaphors from the conceptual frameworks chosen for study here.

It is in light of this that the reader may acknowledge that metaphor comprehension is a common theme that runs centrally throughout the thesis. According to Pinder and Bourgeois (1983), metaphor is "a creative activity, as its comprehension (Pinder and Bourgeios, 1983, p. 608, citing Andrew Ortony, 1979). Part of that creative activity is the understanding and re-understanding of metaphor that metaphor invites. And in particular, drawing attention to the imbedded metaphorical structure of what is presumed non-metaphorical/literal accounting regulatory discourse: the accounting conceptual framework.

1.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS AS THE EMPIRICAL SITE

> "The conventional view holds that professional accountant's role is to report factually about the entity's economic and financial transactions and economic events in a neutral, objective fashion, as reflected in the decision usefulness conceptual framework that requires accounting information to be not only useful of relevance to users, but also be reliable, veritable and representationally faithful"

(Macintosh, 2002, p. 38)

Financial accounting conceptual frameworks are the basic building blocks of standard setting, representing what may be called, accounting knowledge (Hines, 1991, 1992). Conceptual frameworks help assist accounting standard setters develop new rules, concepts and standards of practice, helping to settle conceptual ambiguity. Accounting knowledge of the external world can be understood via rules that communicate real world corporate phenomena. Conceptual frameworks are not only useful to accountants who are able to communicate to financial statement users, conceptual frameworks also guide the

development of future standard setting. And in order to gain knowledge of possible economic outcomes, accounting rules are develop*ing*. The conceptual framework is open-ended; hence the word project seems to be altogether collocated with conceptual frameworks[2]. As Hines wrote, conceptual frameworks are sites in which a determination is made about what *counts* as knowledge, and what sustains the social world of capitalism is financial accounting:

> "The meaning and significance of Conceptual framework projects is not so much functional and technical, 'but rather social and cultural. Financial accounting practices are implicated in the construction and reproduction of the social world' and it would seem to follow, as suggested by several authors that CF projects similarly play a part in the process of the social construction of reality"

> (Hines, 1991, p, 313)

The conceptual framework project, according to Hines, is a crucial document for one important reason. Accounting knowledge is constituted through the conceptual framework project. Hines proposes that a conceptual framework represents a body of technical knowledge that also reproduces current lived, social reality.

> "In the social sciences, the undermining of realism has been even more complete. A variety of authors have shown that social reality is reflexively constituted by accounts of reality, and that the decisions and actions of social agents based on these accounts, constructs, maintains and reproduces social reality."

> (Hines, 1991, p. 317)

1.4.1 TYPES OF FRAMEWORKS

There have of course been a number of framework projects at the national and international level. And these national and international efforts are presently ongoing. In the US, Canada and Australia for example, there have been conceptual frameworks since the 1980s. In the

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[2] It is presumed that accounting conceptual frameworks are still affected by a kind of powerful system of metaphysics, that maintains faith in the market, the capitalist system and its technologies that frameworks sustain. Overall, the thesis attempt is to understand this trajectory in knowledge through exploring vision metaphors. What certain insights vision metaphors potentially inform regarding the changing landscape of conceptual frameworks' and the varied conceptions of knowledge, particularly as accounting enters this particular era of capitalism.

United Kingdom, there was the Statement of Principles, published in December 1999. There have also been a number of international efforts, such as the International Standard Committee's initial framework in 1989.

In this thesis, it was decided to begin with Financial Accounting Standard Board's initial efforts that began in 1978. And then finalize the analysis with the most recent international exposure draft, published in May 2015. At the time of writing, the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) has yet to finish its most recent project, which the board expects to complete by early (provisionally March) 2018.

Thus, the analysis focuses on the following frameworks: Financial Accounting Standards Board 1978 SFAC No.1 Objectives of Financial Reporting, the SFAC No. 2, Qualitative Characteristics of Accounting Information (1980), the SFAC No. 5 Recognition and Measurement in Financial Statements (1984) the SFAC No. 6, Elements of Financial Statement (1985), the International Accounting Standards committee's (IASB[3]) 1989 Framework for the Presentation of Financial Statements, Accounting Standards Board 1999 Statement of Principles, and The 2010 International Accounting Standards Board's Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting. The IASB's Exposure Draft published on the 28th of May 2015 is also analyzed as a proxy for the 2018 framework. The aim is to explore these conceptual frameworks, and identify the vision metaphors that appear in each of them, categorize them, and explore the categorical transition over time.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS

The research questions are linked to metaphorical evolution in the *Vision is Knowledge*. This metaphor is a submerged, assumed conceptual metaphor[4]. How this could be studied in a longitudinal study of accounting conceptual framework's metaphorical content influences the research questions. The questions are twofold:

Question 1: Are there differences in the type of categories of vision metaphors that appear in conceptual frameworks in the period from FASB 1978 to IASB 2015 Exposure Draft. What are these different types?

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[3] The International Standards Committee is now Board, and (IASB) is referred to throughout.

[4] A conceptual metaphor refers to the understanding of one idea (concept) in terms of another.

Thus, could accounting *Vision as Knowledge* be a transformative conceptual metaphor in accounting conceptual frameworks? Firstly, by identifying vision metaphors, and categorizing them. From this, a further exploratory research question could be determined:

> Question 2: What is the evolution in the patterns/trends in these types of vision metaphors that appear in conceptual frameworks inform about the way conceptual frameworks conceptualize knowledge?

To answer this question, an attempt to qualitatively analyze in some detail the concordance[5] lines of the vision metaphors that are found. That is, to analyze also the context, words, clauses and phrases that are in close proximity to the vision metaphor. This was in order to investigate differences in how knowledge is conceptualized in conceptual frameworks periodically.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS' IMPORTANCE FOR CRITICAL ACCOUNTING

The accounting literature focuses on the overt, almost accessible notion of language. Other literature focuses on more obvious metaphors. Amernic and Craig (2006), exploring CEO speech, interestingly sheds light on the rhetoric of business discourse (see also Amernic and Craig, 2009, Amernic, Craig and Tourish, 2007). These research findings provide insight into the language of business at an overt level. The submerged conceptual metaphorical language is not the type of language that the accounting research focuses on. It is understood here that certain other automatic or unconscious metaphorical language is underexplored, within the context of accounting discourse. Especially discourse that does not entirely overflow with rhetorical language (conceptual frameworks). It appears that the depth to which metaphors are submerged in our everyday language is not well understood in financial accounting research.

The employed method in the thesis attempts to get to these deeper, submerged conceptual metaphors. Metaphors that are not so immediately perceived [explained in the methodology and methods chapter (see chapter 5)], but are largely automatically applied in 'normal' everyday descriptive language. It is hoped that the method can help draw out many of the submerged metaphorical visual language that reside in the apparently neutral and value free,

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[5] A concordance is the surrounding context of the word, in order to understand its meaning in situ.

non-metaphorical language of accounting conceptual frameworks: language that is assumed devoid of creatively used overt metaphors[6].

This method assumes that metaphorical language is not entirely accessible on first inspection. That a lot of our language is deeply metaphorical, whose derivation is from a thousand-year-old history, is generally forgotten. Language is composed of many non-deliberate metaphors that point to physical action, the body, and how the body encounters another, physically. The thesis attempts to understand what these deeply, taken for granted vision metaphors are. How they appear, and why they have undergone change in the period is examined in this thesis. The method used here on accounting conceptual frameworks is considered appropriate given accounting frameworks are closer to literal, legal documentation. Accounting conceptual frameworks involve many assumptions about literal, objective or neutral language. But in fact, like other legal discourse, evolves, in the way language has been evolving from a history that spans hundreds if not thousands of years[7].

1.7 METHOD: A CORPUS BASED CONTENT ANALYSIS

In this section, it is now explained what a corpus based content analysis is. A corpus based content analysis is an exploratory research method that has been mainly used by journalists and communication researchers in order to investigate textual data (newspapers, books, articles and so on). A corpus analysis is a way of tracking change. It is a way of revealing certain biases, prejudices, and taken-for-granted assumptions, inter alia, within a text, or even, an archive of texts. In a sense, the analyst desires to reveal underlying questions from the linguistic data studied. The analyst wants to understand the ways in which text(s) could be categorized. That is, how different words, phrases, or lexical units fall into broader categorizations, mainly to reveal themes, subtexts, biases, or ideological thought within texts. The content analyst desires to select targeted texts and reveal the human, embodied and subjective indicators that reside within the object of study.

The corpus based content analysis has been used for many purposes, some of which are shown below (adapted from Weber, 1990, p. 9). These are:

- To reflect cultural patterns, institutions, or societies.

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[6] Such metaphors are sometimes, "one-off metaphors" (Lakoff, 1993, p. 229).

[7] The English courts use the 'literal rule' or 'plain meaning rule' where statutes are to be interpreted. Judges may use a dictionary in order to give words ordinary meaning.

- To reveal the focus of individual, group, institutional, or societal attention.
- To describe trends in communication content.

The corpus analyst tries to pick out different units/words and see how these words fit *within* a particular category. For example, words such as weapons, firearms, bombing, missiles, conscription, detente, battalion, and so on, may belong to a semantic category, "warfare". Thus, the analyst attempts to extract words with similar meanings and group them together under one central conceptual category. And this can be done either by classifying words in accordance to precise meaning (synonyms) or searching for words with similar connotative associations.

In sum, the analyst tries to understand the words, phrases or other units of text with reference to some common theme. This is done by carefully extracting words, and attempting to make sense of those words, phrases, lexical units from patterns generated. Ultimately, the analyst seeks to make sense of the linguistic data found, deciphering meaning and drawing inferences from what is studied. The aim is to reduce data to the categories of a particular frame, which then allows the analyst to break down further these linguistic data into smaller coding (categorizing) frames. The method in the thesis is best observed in steps, which is described in the next section.

1.8 STEP 1 - IDENTIFYING VISION METAPHORS

Vision metaphors are identified, as a first step, using a web-based corpus analysis software W-Matrix. W-Matrix provides word frequencies for each and every word used in the frameworks studied. From this, vision words could be isolated from the frameworks using an etymological analysis. The word's etymology is used in order to identify whether the word had some visual relationship to each word that appeared in the conceptual framework. In connection with our methodology, it is suggested that there is a sort of *visual quality* to the language in conceptual frameworks. This was a first step.

Thus, another, look for the primitive origin of the metaphor is performed in order to identify *how much* or *how little* of the active or inactive body is present in the word's etymological root. The Indo-European root or Proto language (basically, the word's morpheme) is used in order to identify how much of the body is rooted in the vision metaphors studied. The approach is to look for vision metaphors, as a first step. An etymological search engine is used to identify whether the word had a connotative/semantic relationship with vision. Second, the vision word's indo European root (primitive root) is used in order to determine

how much of bodily activity was present in the metaphor, *Vision is Knowledge.* For our methodology, from a non-constructivist perspective, vision is normally associated with disengagement or inactivity. It is associated with a passive, sedentary stillness, that of a mirroring mind that implies little activity, and more withdrawal. However, it is observed that there are other active vision metaphors. This is where the word's Indo-European etymology demonstrates the physical, metaphorical genesis of our modern vision metaphor(s). And this indicates something else about *Vision as Knowledge.* That is perhaps indicative of move away from such simply passive, withdrawn metaphors of vision. Therefore, the aim was to isolate these types of metaphors and examine them over time. In step two, these are categorized in two ways, which is explained briefly in next short section.

1.8.1 STEP 2 - CATEGORIZING VISION METAPHORS

Once the first stage identification is complete, these metaphors are then categorized into two main groups. The two groups here are first deliberate vision metaphors and second submerged (non-deliberate) vision metaphors, the latter using the vision metaphor's Proto Indo European or language root to analyze the extent to which the body resides in vision. Once categorized, these are studied longitudinally in order to assess the evolution in vision metaphor. To state briefly, deliberate metaphors, which will be explained briefly in the next section, do not appear frequently in accounting conceptual frameworks as most frameworks tend to avoid deliberate metaphorical language. The main focus on the thesis is on submerged vision metaphors.

1.8.1.2 DELIBERATE VISION METAPHORS

Deliberate categories are identified as a first step. The main aim of the thesis, however, is on the development of submerged vision metaphors, whose change is largely under acknowledged. To make these a little clearer, deliberate metaphors are generally creative, poetic, or imaginative, metaphors. "Juliet is the Sun" in Act 2, Scene 2 of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is a typical example. Deliberate metaphors are those metaphors that are associated with creativity, usually found in poetry or fiction. They are normally thought of as being quite *clear* metaphors, in that, they can be more easily isolated from the text. The accounting literature, it is argued, seeks to isolate deliberate or consciously used metaphors. Metaphors that sit, largely, on the surface of language (Deignan, 2005). The vision metaphor understood in the thesis connects with another view of understanding metaphor in accounting conceptual frameworks.

1.8.1.3 SUBMERGED (NON-DELIBERATE) VISION METAPHORS

Submerged vision metaphors are those metaphors that run through our language but are unrecognizable or barely recognizable as metaphors. That is, they appear quite literal, automatic or natural. For example, such statements, such as "I see what you mean" or "There are some good insights" or "your view is short-sighted", are metaphorical but have the function of appearing non-obvious. But only through deeper inspection can they be brought to the surface, into the domain of reason.

Submerged metaphors evidence a conceptual metaphor: *Vision as objective knowledge*. According to Lakoff and Johnson, the conception of objectivity and knowledge is privileged in Western culture through a metaphor of embodied perception: vision. Objective knowledge results, according to Lakoff and Johnson, when the body views or experiences the world from a distance. Intellectual distance, reading and writing, is the route to true, transparent knowledge, and are part of the mental processes or activities that determines knowledge. The body distances itself from engagement with other objects in order to know them, requiring characteristics of stillness or the gaze to deliver knowledge. The body is away from the world, physically. Vision is a metaphor that is submerged in thinking about knowledge, representing what is considered objective, neutral and value free knowledge.

The thesis demonstrates that vision metaphors can be categorized into two specific ways. It is recognized that there are two submerged vision metaphor categories. Vision metaphors are either associated with the activity of body (the eye is active) or associated with the inactivity of the body (associated more with the mind than with the human body). It was felt it would be interesting to study the evolution of these metaphors in this context of accounting conceptual frameworks. This is because inactivity has to do with passivity and spectatorship in looking *through* the eyes; where the object is re-presented in the mind. The other has to do with embodied sight (See Jay, 1994, p. 150) in that vision connects with the moving body here; where the body sees *with* the eyes. The eye, like the body, is active, perceptive in determining one's degree of knowledge. Quite significantly for financial accounting knowledge and objectivity, is the presence of such inactivity, the "mental mirroring of an external reality" (Johnson, 2017, p. 70) or activity (the physical, moving body), where "cognition is action" (Johnson, 2017, p 70). In terms of whether seeing is active or inactive (disembodied) and what this means, would most logically determine what kind of visual, objective knowledge conceptual frameworks seem to be aiming at.

It is found (see chapter 6), that there were more active submerged vision metaphors. And that this evidenced a more embodied, intersubjective and perceptive sort of construction of what objective knowledge is, over time. This conception attributes activities, such as cutting, moving or observing, to vision. Inactive metaphors deal with mainly academic, philosophical or intellectual thinking, the mind over the body. That is, they deal with *knowing or epistemology* (including words like recognition and diagnosis), *existing or ontology* (representation and presentation), and *observation* (seeing or vision). These were all tracked and identified for evolving trends over time. The method of categorization can be summarized as follows:

- Step 1 – Identify for vision metaphors using W-Matrix.
- Step 2 = Discover deliberate vision metaphors.
- Step 3 = Discover submerged vision metaphors (the thesis's main focus).
- Step 4 = Categorize these metaphors into two categories, using the word's Indo-European root, in relation to the following:
a) more activity of the body (root pertains to cutting, grasping, moving, et al)
b) more inactivity of the body (root pertains to knowing, existing and observing)
- Step 4 – Split these into two separate categories and study longitudinally.

1.8.2 STEP 3 - BASIC TRENDS AND PATTERNS: CONCORDANCE ANALYSIS AND CLOSE READING

After separating the submerged vision metaphors into these two categories of *active* and *inactive*, it was considered useful also to look more deeply into concordances (surrounding words or context of the metaphor) in order to see within the context of the conceptual frameworks, whether the conceptualization of vision could be understood further by examining the metaphor's verbal context. To take look a more in-depth look into what conceptual frameworks were mentioning, to understand vision more, an investigation into the surrounding concordances was linked to the study of individual vision metaphors. Additionally, it was felt that a slightly closer reading could be achieved in order to analyze Vision as Knowledge. It is identified that going more deeply into the frameworks context was useful. This was because the written context elucidated further some of the individual metaphors that were found.

1.9 THESIS LAYOUT

The main thesis is split into seven chapters, which includes this introductory chapter, a review of the literature (chapter 2), a theoretical framework chapter (chapter 3), an overview of the conceptual frameworks studied in the thesis (chapter 4), methods and methodology (chapter 5), results (chapter 6) and a conclusion chapter (chapter 7).

1.9.1 CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

In chapter two, a review of the literature is provided. In particular, the focus is on some of the ways that the accounting literature focuses on a broader vision metaphor is reviewed. The literature explains that accounting theory has challenged the objectivist, positivistic and neutralist image of accounting policy making. That accounting effectively reflects economic objects and events well by adopting a distant, disembodied, and indifferent approach towards the world in order to know it is still upheld. And so, knowledge is only possible through a treatment of the world in a specifically reductive or fetishistic sense. The critical accounting literature challenges the conventional view that financial accounting is a passive activity; one that merely mirrors financial reality. They highlight that the aim of accounting is to produce other, good images of corporate realities. Which, overall, financial accounting, now finds difficulty in doing.

Some of the initial thinking is that inspired by David Solomons, who drafted the qualitative characteristics concepts statement 2. Solomons initially developed, what is known as, a "neutralist" position in the accounting literature and is used as a starting point for the literature review. From this, other significant, critical papers are analyzed. Publications that have challenged this "common sense" view proposed by Solomons, whose metaphors appear in the FASB SFAC No. 2 document, are outlined in this chapter. It is observed that such literature focuses on the postmodern, structural, post-structural, and other hermeneutic approaches, in order to advance a somewhat less than straightforward view of accounting. This view is simply that a good eye on the way organizations function is a faulty position. It is observed that these ideas are extremely important movements nonetheless. They are alternatives that reflect a period of anxiety over accounting's descriptive objectivity. Financial accounting claims, regarding accounting knowledge as vision, is challenged quite openly. More straightforwardly, it is suggested these papers focus on the importance of accounting as a language game; one that supports the development of accounting concepts

that are far from objective, literal, or value neutral. Financial accounting is not a visual medium that expands the viability and visibility of financial reality. Accounting is a mere language that is assumed *to reflect* inherent economic features; features that are made by the presupposed, and rather shared aims, of wealth maximizing behavior. This metaphor of vision is the notion that language reflects some inherent property or feature of others, and becomes difficult to sustain and is open to refutation. It is argued that as the momentum for capitalism escapes human access, Vision, as a metaphor for knowledge, is challenged over time in the accounting literature. The aim of the literature review overall conveys the anti-visual and anti-realist direction the literature expounds, and the corresponding difficulties that arise from modelling financial reality with accounting rules.

1.9.3 CHAPTER 3 – THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

Chapter three gives some theoretical background to the thesis. Overall it seeks to explain the change in vision metaphor from modernity to postmodernity, through historians, philosophers and art criticism. This discussion centres around vision and its deconstruction, in our postmodern era. The idea of *Vision as Mind*, disconnected from a body that tends to impede the progress of objective knowledge, is understood as part of accounting's conception of what objective knowledge appears to be, at least in earlier conceptual frameworks. The idea of vision as an evolving concept is important to the idea of different other visual possibilities. Which is linked in the thesis to scholars who work in various areas of philosophy, art criticism, sociology and history. It is discovered that the eye is understood in terms of the passivity of an acute mind/intellect, associated with reflection metaphors, where mirroring and image building qualities are built in. The move away from this conception of vision vis-a-vis passivity arises from a movement towards newer understandings of representation away from the purely static form. That is, that the mind is embodied and requires an embodied cognitive system that is open to mutation. Not only to understand, but in order to gain knowledge must there be a capacity for evolutionary transition. This thinking forces a new way of thinking about subjectivity, no longer as an eye that is of the mind, but an eye that is attached to a physical, moving body that is subjected to material forces.

1.9.4 CHAPTER 4 - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

In the next chapter, a basic background to conceptual frameworks that is studied in the thesis is provided. The frameworks analyzed in the thesis start from 1978 and finish with the 2015

exposure draft. It is recognized on first reading that conceptual frameworks are similarly structured. Conceptual frameworks share much of the same content. The IASB 1989 and IASB 2010 appear to be very similar in nature, for instance. The earlier frameworks, particularly FASB SFAC no. 2 Qualitative Characteristics have a few deliberately used representationalist metaphors that compare accounting reports with representational tools, such as maps or similar projection devices. This is mainly a consequence of David Solomons' influence (Zeff, 1999, p.110). It is recognized that the absence of such metaphors may indicate that accounting conceptual frameworks intentionally remove such deliberate metaphors arising from predilection, which is unsurprising. Those metaphors that do not fit with the more representational, direct or literal straightforward language that later frameworks may be aiming for are no longer included but may serve as part of the conceptual framework narrative. Nevertheless, this chapter is brief overview of the conceptual framework period that is analyzed in the thesis.

1.9.5 CHAPTER 5 - METHODOLOGY AND METHOD[8]

1.9.5.1 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, Lakoff and Johnson's methodology is used to justify a causal account of metaphor in accounting. Their theory explains that the body (vision) metaphor for conceptualizing other, more abstract experiences (knowledge). Lakoff and Johnson's theorizing is applied in the thesis in order to argue that concepts are cultural, and depend on having a body and a shared world. And that conceptual schemes are subject to semantic changes as the body encounters/experiences the world in radically new ways. According to Lakoff and Johnson, the way bodies interact with their environments[9] influences the types of meanings we have, the ones we share which, may or may not, have value. Therefore, as a consequence, Lakoff and Johnson point out that mirroring and reflection metaphors are at best consequential. They arise because of the way the lived subject withdraws from physical activity and simply looks, and that this way of looking is inherent to the foundation of knowledge in the Western Philosophy (See Johnson, 2017). Since the body withdraws from doing things and simply looks at things, the way that the body then encounters the world is withdrawn, distant, and passive. That as a consequence generates a kind of disembodied form of knowledge that privileges a representational knowledge; one that yields the

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[8] The methodology and method section are included in one chapter.

[9] The thesis adopts the term *environment* for convenience only.

associated metaphors of mirroring, reflection and representational accuracy formed in the cognitive system. To put it in the way Andy Clark (2003, 2008), philosopher and proponent of the extended mind hypothesis, thinks about brain, body and world, there is a dynamic interplay between the evolving technologically advancing world, and the way the sensing body responds and interacts in real time with that world. And it is the world that affects the cognitive processing of human subjects. This happens by way of triadic relation in which the mind is not linked to the brain alone, but composes the relation between brain, the non-neural body and the external environment. In crude terms, it might be said that:

World evolves = body evolves = mind evolves

(Clark, 1997)[10]

Therefore, Lakoff and Johnson's theories on embodied meaning is not only used to categorize our vision metaphors, but also to identify them. Lakoff and Johnson contend that that vision helps to conceptualize other, perhaps abstract experiences, like knowledge. Thus, Lakoff and Johnson's thoughts on embodied cognition reveals that the body, its location and surrounding environment, shapes cognition. And that the type of body we have, coupled with the type of environment in which that body is embedded, has a significant influence on language. Such a position holds that the world, body, and concept, or metaphor, are tightly bound together, and cannot be so readily discarded. So much so that the metaphor is a deeply ingrained or constitutive part of thought that is unnoticed in accounting discourse. It is Lakoff and Johnson's argument, therefore, that metaphor structures thinking on a deeper level, and that thinking is based on the types of bodies we inhabit, the types of environments we share, and the interconnectedness between the body and environments that engender the metaphors.

1.9.5.2 - METHOD

As mentioned, W-Matrix (a web-based corpus analysis and comparison tool) is used in order to isolate potential metaphor candidates. An initial etymological analysis was done. This was performed in order to initially assess whether the candidate word had some connotative or denotative connection to vision. That is, the word had/had not a certain *visuality* about it. If

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[10] In Clark's (1997) book, *Being There, Putting Brain, Body and World Together Again*. A similar view is held in The *Embodied Mind* by Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1991: xx), in which they define cognition as "the representation of a world that is independent of our perceptual and cognitive capacities by a cognitive system that exists independent of the world."

it did, the word was included for further investigation. According to Lakoff and Johnson's methodology, knowledge is more closely associated with a distinct lack of bodily activity; usually associated with idle, passive viewing. And also indicates that primacy may be given to representational modes of thought which pertains to image, vision and the mind (See Simpson, 2017). From there a method was found in order to locate idle, sedentary features in the metaphor, and, also, other types of active vision metaphors that reveal whether the eye is inactive and fitting the archetype of Western thought or whether the eye is doing something else. This was done through using the word's Proto-Indo European Root. This helped to isolate inactivity or activity in the vision metaphor. Vision metaphors were explored over time in order to identify change in the conceptualization of accounting knowledge and what this might mean. From this, two categories were observed: deliberate and submerged vision metaphors, which were explored over time.

1.9.6 CHAPTER 6 - RESULTS

In these frameworks, there are deliberate vision metaphors and there are active (body) and inactive (mind) submerged vision metaphors. And we track these longitudinally. What is discovered is that the starting point is FASB which employs deliberate metaphors, basically intentionally used metaphors coming from David Solomons in the early Financial Accounting Standards Board. These intentional metaphors are considered briefly because they are so few in number. The focus of the thesis is on submerged (non-deliberate) vision metaphors, and these are examined in more detail in this chapter. Over time, more submerged metaphors are identified. These metaphors provide evidence of a more active vision (related to the body), which signifies something different about vision as connected to the mind, in opposition to the body. This is explored this in more detail in chapter six. It is basically discovered that Conceptual Frameworks move away from this knowledge conceptualized in terms of the representational mind (Vision as Mind/disembodied), and that there is more evidence of a more active, non-representational vision that resides in conceptual frameworks over time, knowledge is the body (Vision as Body/embodied).

1.9.7 CHAPTER 7 - THESIS CONCLUSION

Chapter seven is the conclusion chapter. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part provides an overview of how the research questions have been addressed in the thesis, what the empirical findings suggest, and the implications for financial accounting as a result. The second part demonstrates the ontological political implications that arise from conceptual

frameworks in terms of the findings of the thesis, and what this may mean for financial accounting more generally.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

> "Put in an accounting context, a post-structural[11] perspective rules out the contention that accounting information and reports should, or can, reflect, some real, out-there reality. It sees persistent calls for transparency as futile and so irrelevant."

> (Macintosh, 2000, p. 119)

As a reminder, the basic purpose of the thesis is to understand the evolving status of accounting as objective knowledge through vision metaphors that are submerged - that are subconsciously used - within accounting conceptual frameworks. Through a corpus analysis of vision metaphor(s) within accounting regulatory discourse the thesis attempts to unpick these vision metaphors in order to determine what is the meaning of objective knowledge in financial accounting over the course of the period from modernity to postmodernity. The way this is done is to study vision as a submerged, largely latent metaphor for accounting knowledge as objective in accounting discourse (Walters and Young, 2008). And this is studied across time in accounting conceptual frameworks. Since vision normally conceptualizes knowledge in Western culture (Rorty, 1979, Sweetser, 1990, Gibbs, 2017, Lakoff and Johnson, 1999), the thesis attempts to draw a connection between vision and the status of knowledge and objectivity.

The aim of the literature review, first, is to show how metaphor is normally viewed, as an overt accessible aspect of language which is clear, lucid and easily recognizable. It is to convey in what sense metaphor is normally viewed in the critical accounting literature, and what epistemological and ontological assumptions underpin thinking about metaphor in critical accounting literature. It is not the aim of the literature review to systematically review each accounting paper on accounting that uses or theorizes about metaphor. The logic of the chapter is to convey historically and argumentatively how thinking on metaphor remains hard-wired to certain postmodern and post-structural strands of thought. Thought that

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[11] The emphasis here being on the power of language to hold identities: "Poststructuralism argues that, instead, signs are filtered through ideologically tainted discourses which play a large role in shaping their meaning in the minds of both writers and readers" (Macintosh, 2002, p. 14).

privileges human access and the ability to turn anything into something else with the agent's knowledge of language. The thesis' view is that this ability is not so automatically presumed.

In short, the thesis' view is that metaphors are submerged and imbedded within discourse. That they are banal, and part of everyday language use, is conceived important for the focus of the thesis' contribution to the extant literature. This view of metaphors influences the choice of empirical site (the apparent neutral, literal language of accounting conceptual frameworks) and the methodology and methods deployed in the thesis (see chapters 5 and 6), and ultimately the conclusions drawn (chapter 7).

2.1 ACCOUNTING AND METAPHOR

The literature reviewed here falls broadly under what may be called critical theory in financial accounting. Critical theory adopts a view, and this is generalized, that financial accounting functions no different from any other discourse: novels, poems, or any other literary object. Critical theory in the context of financial accounting also explores the idea that accounting is itself a metaphor. If accounting is a representational-expressivist language, it can also be metaphorical/non-representational. However, it is argued in this review, that this a way of *thinking* about metaphor. To the extent that the critical project tries to emancipate from prevailing prejudicial beliefs, critical accounting views accounting as a metaphorical language that could be otherwise. This is the view that accounting is a language that can be consciously accessed, changed, exchanged, to be reconceived anew. And it is in this sense, it is argued, that accounting as a language is conceived metaphorical.

In this chapter, it is acknowledged that there is a distinct skepticism surrounding vision metaphors for knowledge in financial accounting, which fuels this conscious view of metaphor above. Throughout the 80s, 90s, and into the 00s, research has largely focused on critiquing vision's purported objectivizing properties, the idea of its neutral literality and scientific appeals to truth, knowledge and objectivity. In thinking about accounting and metaphor, accounting is viewed *as a* metaphor. But in a very specific sense. Metaphor is viewed as part of subjects, of us. Metaphors are at our disposal, mainly situated at the surface of our languages, and are consequently subject to recasting from willing subjects who can access and alter language systems, if and when need be, in order to alter beliefs and to, fundamentally, re-shape reality accordingly. It is felt a shift away from vision metaphors of mirroring, reflection and literality is somewhat consistent with this transition in the critical

accounting that attempts to sidle away from *Vision as objective knowledge;* where the idea of an unfixed reference point disappears, where words do not relate to things as they really are, and how this way of thinking becomes a predominant view in conceiving accounting as a metaphorical language.

2.1.1 THE LITERAL: VISUAL ACCURACY OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD

An example from the literature may explicate this a little more clearly in order to bring out two positions from which the reader can locate the thesis' position. That is, there is first the literal, "non-constructivist", almost scientific/atomistic position, which is, according to Pinder and Bourgeois, "the more traditional perspective". The view "holds that the description and explanation of physical reality can be conducted with precise scientific procedures that make use of unambiguous language processes" (Pinder and Bourgeois, 1983, p. 609). In short, this position sees knowledge in terms of descriptions that correspond to real underlying phenomena; where accounting is a mirror of financial reality, where accounting statements are relevant, objective and truthful. The premise here is that the subject can get outside and obtain exact access to the real essence of the underlying or inherent features of an object or event. It is pure vision as knowledge, where truth, meaning and knowledge are related to the concept of faithful representation.

2.1.2 METAPHORICAL OVERTNESS

On the other side, however, there resides the more extreme constructivist positions. Which, as argued here, views metaphor in a particularly, perhaps partial, way. These include various and many structuralist, post-structuralist, hermeneutic, linguistic and postmodern perspectives found in accounting research. The views hold that the traditional, visual, literal, even scientific perspective as unrealistic, quixotic even, in accounting. The basis for this it seems is that accounting is little guided/anchored by world that is typical of the type of knowledge outcomes that is observed in physics journals. These perspectives show that accounting language is *overtly* metaphorical where accounting rules have little or no connection to an underlying or even phenomenal reality, and since metaphors are presumed minimally informative and hence non-representational. Consequently, the premise is that metaphorical languages are assumed accessible, knowable and replaceable, in order to replace the accounting scheme with new/other metaphorical schemes. These approaches suggest that financial accounting is highly subjective, imaginary, magical concepts even,

where knowledge, truth, meaning and objectivity are relativized to the accounting language adopted via the power politics in place.

Metaphor, in this sense, is thought about in a particular way. It is associated with immediate human access or the human mind. And metaphor is understandable enough to be exchanged for other languages to reach newer perhaps even more ethical forms of accounting through other suitable models. Through identifying the features of the metaphor as interchangeable through a particular understanding of what metaphors are, a typical view of metaphor arises: that metaphor emerges as the outcome of subjects who remain *unaffected* by environments. Subjects who are free to play with signifiers, since reference to reality as unfixed/unmoored is assumed.

2.1.3 How is Metaphor Understood in the Accounting Literature

Basically, meaning in financial accounting is not derived not from an accurate description and explanation of physical reality, as Pinder and Bourgeios (1983) mention, which is assumed from the realist, literalist approach. According to a hard social-constructivist position, meaning is derived from fitting socially constructed signs onto a lumpy, unstructured, indefinable world, in order to *give it* structure and meaning. And that being said, accounting as a language has the quality of the metaphorical about it: that is, the way in which metaphor is understood in the literature is mainly alive, overt and rhetorical, consciously used, and manifest in accounting discourse. But underlying this perspective is an ontological position where the world is presumed a malleable substance which subjects mold and fashion into their uses, needs and desires. This is demonstrated by methods that seek to locate metaphors that are *used* to seek out figurative language on the surface of accounting discourses that are presumed permeated with ideology and power. Subjects consciously or deliberately use metaphors where metaphors are seen as conscious attempts to support a particular ideological position.

The way in which metaphor is understood here, it is argued, is overt, or plainly apparent to the reader/researcher/viewer. Metaphors reside on the surface of language. The accounting literature presumes that metaphors are outcomes of individuals, where those individuals are somewhat conscious of the everyday language(s) they speak. The notion that metaphors are clearly understood, and easily overturned/altered, is, the thesis believes, a product of many postmodern, over-mining attitudes that appeal to this view of an ontologically lumpy world,

and which appears to seek to disrupt or disavow notions of objectivity in accounting discourse as simply implausible or false. Through seeing accounting as a language that subjects create independently of environment(s)/lifeworld and experience, the postmodern view ignores, perhaps, the very unconscious aspects of metaphors that form part of our objective, accounting discourse. That is, and in the view of the thesis, metaphors are outcomes from the way in which we engage with the world, and how it steers the way in which language is used or appears (See chapter 5).

According to these critical, postmodern perspectives, the reader derives meaning from the way signs hang together. Accounting signs are mere appearances, not reflecting "qualities". Accounting signs hover, as it were, over and above the object (economic event/phenomena). Resultantly it is presumed accounting can turn anything into anything else, as if by magic (Gambling, 1977, 1987). The accounting sign, so it goes, does not refer or latch onto the essential features of an-other, from which a subject seeks to gain knowledge. And by virtue of this view (that the subject forms social ontologically subjective representations) it is implied that society has the access to language quite consciously; has freedom to change these languages, in order to emancipate from the language that holds false beliefs in place, and so as to alter realities consequently. There is an intuition here: a postmodern idea of clear access to the metaphors that are used to socially produced lumpy objects. Because the signifier does not relate to the object's features, since it fails to mirror or reflect those features, it is recognized that accounting signs are unsteady representations that demand greater justification for the why they exist.

It is important to note that this is how metaphor is normally understood when accounting is viewed as a language that *shapes* corporate realities. Metaphor is understood in this context to mean change, alteration, playfulness, unobstructed variation, from which new languages can be created in lieu of the extant language. Since accounting makes, constructs and gives meaning to reality, and does so in partial or one-sided ways, metaphor is understood to mean freedom of choice over which language to pursue [12]. It implies access to society's

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[12] "A great deal of recent French thought in a wide variety of fields is one way or another imbued with a profound suspicion of vision and its hegemonic role in the modern era" (Jay, 1994, p. 14) Such critiques of *knowledge as vision*, however, are broadly found within structuralism, post-structuralism, and the hermeneutic and linguistic turns. Those who take up positions may criticize the vision metaphor of knowledge metaphor. The aim of these postmodern positions is to recognize that knowledge of other is connected to heteronormative or discursive formations of the viewed other. And that these understandings are, according to these positions, unfair and prejudicial. That is, *Vision as Knowledge* is a smokescreen for the re-production of injustice or unfairness that the capitalist wishes to uphold as objective. Vision was criticized as source domain for knowledge because vision said something about the essence of some other. Thus, as Martin Jay puts, French though became suspicious of any creeping sense of power that resided in such narratives of the other that claimed it rendered transparently some essence.

presumptions, cultural biases whilst recognizing that metaphors are rhetorical tools. Financial accounting may have knowledge of economic phenomena, but according to the position that accounting is a language that is metaphorical, it is more likely that knowledge is a coherent set of normative judgements (deriving from thinking subjects who are independent of world effects). It is, predominantly, that power is with the subject. It is the subject who has mastery of thought. The immediate or broader environment has little, if any, influence on metaphors/language. The way in which the body is affected to produce metaphors is absent. By accessing the conscious deliberate use of metaphors in discourse, metaphors can be understood to mean accessible, and ultimately alterable to create new, better, more amenable beliefs and subsequent realities. The thesis considers that metaphor should not be conceived in such an openly overt, and conscious way; that is not just an outcome of subjects willing the world to be in their own, ideal image. Metaphors are not so easily accessible nor radically changeable. Metaphors, predominantly, are hidden, imbedded or locked into the very recesses of our discourses. Metaphors are unconscious; outcomes of the way we, as society, engage with the world. They are products or evidence of a deeper body-world engagement.

2.1.4 A DIFFERENT VIEW ON METAPHOR: SUBMERGED METAPHOR

The perspective on metaphor adopted in this thesis is different. Which does not assume notions of radical free play over signifiers, where there is no unfixed mooring or reference (signified or referent) to which signs refer. In a paper by Pinder and Bourgeois (1983), the debate between these two dual positions (literal/metaphorical) hinges "on the nature of language and the role played in human discourse by literal and figurative speech and thought processes" (Pinder and Bourgeois, p. 608). These processes, according to Pinder and Bourgeois (1983), could then be outlined in terms of how language functions. That, is, that language is bifurcated into literal or metaphorical/figurative categories.

Just to remind the reader, for the first (vision/external/scientific/literal view), accounting is viewed as literal fact (a language that corresponds to facts). Not surprisingly, this relies on a deeper metaphor: accounting as a language is a metaphorical window onto financial phenomena. For the second (blindness/internal/metaphorical position) accounting is viewed a metaphorical, non-representational construction or scheme within the inter-subjective domain of accounting standard setting. Overall, the first position implies vision; where accounting should be a literal, descriptive activity, corresponding to the features of financial reality. The latter or second position implies a more 'internal' position, where reality is

cordoned off to the relativity of coherent justificatory human normative/ethical judgements. Where metaphors are assumed to function in this latter overt way, to establish the freedom with which to order and produce new positions/new languages, language must be knowable and accessible. New positions on how accounting *should* principally function are based on accessing signs and altering them, for the betterment of our social reality. The position must assume that metaphors are easily recognizable, that continue towards shaping and making reality.

Between these two extremes, the thesis takes up a middle position with regard to metaphor. Which is to say the thesis takes the position that metaphors are not so overt, not so identifiably accessible, and hence, are not so freely changeable. The middle position is that metaphors are outcomes of the social beings encountering space, environments, reality. Metaphors are causal rather than mere justificatory outcomes. This difference is elaborated in more detail in the methodological chapter, but for now, a brief overview is given. The following quote from the accounting literature highlights the position that may explain the view that the thesis wishes to pursue:

> "Instead, knowledge comes from the interaction of such information of such information with the context in which it is present…This perspective does not provide any distinction between scientific language and other kinds of discourse."

> (Pinder and Bourgeios, 1983 p. 609).

This view, suggests, understood herein, that metaphors are deeply buried within thought, submerged in language; metaphors are not so plainly apparent. But are rather produced through a deeper body-world connection.

The *Vision as Knowledge* (a metaphor) is one metaphor that is essentially part of a socially contextualized norm, which goes mainly unnoticed in discourse and Western epistemology (Levin, 1993). That is, one that remains within the experience of human subjects and which is, on the contrary, difficult to see, to gain access, and even understand at times (Crary, 1991, Jay, 1994).

The position of thesis is that knowledge is an outcome of binding together of environments and people, and engender the types of metaphors that appear in discourse[13]. In other words,

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[13] Metaphors have been studied in niche accounting areas, such as accounting pedagogy (See McGoun, Bettner and Coyne, 2007).

they do not arise merely from the will, intentions, predilections and wishes of subjects: accounting standard setters trapped in internal, coherent justificatory struggles so as to establish objective accounting standards. But rather, outcomes are entrenched within basic experiences of shared worlds; they are not so easily recognizable nor replaceable it is argued because they form part of our very interactions with the worlds inhabited.

Therefore, in the methodological chapter, the thesis argues that metaphors are outcomes of a profound body-world engagement. That as worlds alters/evolves so to do our bodies. With this plasticity of mind, meanings, concepts and ideas are altered in an unconscious way. Submerged metaphors alter, move, and shift in tandem with the world. They are outcomes of the way bodies are bound up with that world. This view detracts from the common conception of accounting knowledge as either pure vision (literal) or pure blindness (overtly metaphorical). This is what metaphor is, for the thesis. Metaphor is inextricably bound up with the world in which we live, and, for this reason, certain types of metaphor are submerged within language. They are not always subjectively ornamental, stylistic or rhetorical.

In this sense, Pinder and Bourgeois (1983) in their reply to Gareth Morgan, assert quite clearly this position. They assert, "Knowledge comes from the interaction of such information with the context in which it is presented, and, especially, with the individual's preexisting knowledge" (Pinder and Bourgeois, 1983, p. 608). Where subjects are inextricably and inescapably bound up with objects/worlds, metaphor is forming a large part in the conceptualization of worlds. In this, all language, even the most objective, is deeply metaphorical.

"There is no distinction between scientific, literal and other kinds of discourse."

(Pinder and Bourgeois, 1983, p. 603).

If there is no distinction between metaphorical (bad) and literal (good) descriptions, this is because metaphor is not just an apparent part of subjective, rhetorical language, which can be consequently accessed to alter/shape beliefs freely and independently of external constraints. Rather, metaphor runs deep within and through the objectivity of legalistic, regulatory, objective and neutral language. Metaphor is an essential ingredient as it were of that language. Metaphor provides evidence of the deeper, interconnectedness of body and world:

"Language, perception, and knowledge are all inextricably interdependent."

(Pinder and Bourgeios, 1983 p. 608).

Metaphors are not just thought of as tools to be used to convince and reshape belief. They arise because of a constraining reality which determines the type of metaphors that appear through new experiences of a shared social environment.

However, some critical accounting knowledge seems profoundly suspicious of the assumption that accounting information provides a non-metaphorical representation of "the absolute truth" (Tinker, 1986, Hines, 1988, 1991, Chwiastiak and Young, 2003, Macintosh 2006). Suspicious of any kind of transparency, vision, or scientific claim, the view is that vision is an empty kind of metaphor: a disengaged form of knowledge construction. Qualities of distance, passive, receptive reflection and with it, the objectification of some other, is what many strands of accounting literature aim to jettison, and with good reason. However, what might occur is that critical accounting may transpire to get rid of by thinking about accounting as a language, as a metaphor, but come to think metaphor in a particular way that is partial/subjective/imaginary: that would lead to a form of thinking where it is assumed that subjects exercise too much freedom to create; freedom for subjects to re-make and shape, to re-order society with language. And freedom sometimes can be a bad thing, especially where it goes beyond constraint.

In summary, this chapter acknowledges the challenge *Vision as Knowledge* metaphor (See Sweetser, 1990) faces from the accounting literature, especially from those papers which assert that accounting has a hand in making worlds that are ontologically jumbled (Hines, 1988, Arthur, 1993, Suzuki, 2003). And hold the view that subjects are freely capable of altering conditions or rules independently of any constraining reality, which is considered a way of thinking about language and metaphor, and also a way of thinking about reality as socially constructed (See Alexander and Archer, 2003): that accounting must fit with or apply schemes to a world, to cut into it, in order to make sense out of it. The papers provided here illustrate vision's demise in a sense; where the literature denigrates vision as a metaphor for knowledge, targeting a specific type of scientism: *vision as knowledge as passive/literal/scientific* form of knowledge attainment. One that is generally and implicitly functioning within accounting discourse. Before moving onto the main points of the literature review a structure of the chapter's outline is given below.

2.1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE CHAPTER

The structure of the chapter is presented within three sections that draws out how thinking about metaphor in accounting is theorized. Part one introduces the basic ideas regarding vision as a metaphor for accounting knowledge and objectivity in financial accounting. The first part looks at the debate between David Solomons and Tony Tinker, regarding the purpose and implications of the accounting reporting function. The issue of the discussion is on the nature of accounting: what it should do, and how it should be observed, through taking different metaphorical positions. The second part functions on the assumptions that are made throughout accounting literature, which discusses the issue of the *accounting as a language* metaphor. The view that is highlighted within the literature is the positon that accounting's signs are accessible, changeable, and so replaceable, in order to emancipate beliefs and to start towards thinking new ways of constructing an alternative perhaps fairer, social reality. The chapter then discusses some of the difficulties in accessing language, the ineffectuality of this metaphorical approach to theorizing, and how metaphorical thinking has been judged as a form of entrapment (Walters, 2004). The significance of an alternative approach to thinking about metaphor is considered. Thereafter, the chapter is concluded by outlining the importance of the objective world in its effects on subjects and the production of our metaphors, which leads into subsequent chapters.

The literature review provides a basis from how to think differently about metaphors; how metaphors are linked to postmodern perspectives on subjects who possess control over their languages and their social worlds. While the literature review is non-systematic, the idea behind the literature is to present a historical account of the literature, that hopefully helps convey the development from earlier, modernist positions on thinking about language, knowledge and objectivity, to post-modern thinking about language, knowledge and objectivity, to ultimately, think new ways about metaphor, and how they could be understood in relation to other, embodied cognitive perspectives.

2.2 VISION, LITERAL AND SCIENTIFIC ACCOUNTING KNOWLEDGE

It is recognized that financial accounting's powerful, deeply ingrained metaphor is that accounting is there to *represent* the objective intrinsic features of economic reality (See Shapiro, 1997, 1st philosophical presupposition of financial accounting). The notion of an intrinsic feature implies that financial accounting should provide a good literal representation of an object's qualitative features that actually are present in reality. This vision metaphor is a common-sense traditional, conceptual metaphor of language as a mirror of an objective,

commercial reality. In other words, accounting claims that it more or less reflects the way things are[14]. This is hardly identifiable as a metaphor the thesis maintains throughout.

However, knowledge in accounting is reduced to a simplistic visual conception of language as a descriptive activity. Empirically verifiable facts (transactions, for example) are represented. As Solomons (1991a) argued rather clearly almost 30 years ago, financial accountants are like journalists in this respect (Solomons, 1991a, p. 287). Financial accountants should just, "tell it how it is (Solomons, 1989, p.8). And accounting regulators should base accounting knowledge on how well financial accounting functions as a reflection of the commercial enterprise. Much in the same way journalists report the news, regulators should model accounting knowledge on a metaphorical conception that is primarily visual; where accounting concepts should make transparent claims about the realities of commerce.

The position afforded by Solomons entrenches a typical view of accounting knowledge. One that the critical accounting literature cannot accept. It is one in which knowledge is underpinned by a sense of visual realism, where the eye sees well the essential features of financial reality. This entrenched conceptually metaphoric view holds that accounting knowledge is a genuine reflection of real world economic features. Again, it is influenced by a visual knowledge that is submerged, presupposed in accounting regulation.

For Hines (1991) the foremost philosophical presupposition in financial accounting regulation is visual realism (Hines, 1991). A realism that depends on the extent to which the accounting rule corresponds to real, economic phenomena; where knowledge of the real world is assumed by and large as a matter of straight-forward observation. Gazing onto things, receiving of wisdom *through* the eye, upholds the primacy of vision in terms of knowing.

Yet, knowledge is not absolute. Knowledge is the degree to which the accounting representation corresponds to affairs in the real world (See Shapiro, 1997[15]). And so, regulators frame epistemological concerns in terms of vision as justification. They justify

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[14] Yet, accounting is often viewed as a way of shaping identities, "language is a mediator and shaper of the environment" (Belkaoui, 1978, p. 97).

[15] Shapiro identifies: "socially constructed phenomena are just as real as physical phenomena" (Shapiro, 1997, p. 174). Of course, accounting is not absolutely ontologically objective, nor can it be expected to accomplish complete epistemic objectivity, but with such agreement on ontologically subjective phenomena, like assets or expenses, we may come to realize objectivity in a more common-sense foundation for accounting.

policy making in terms of vision metaphors of faithful representations and true and fair views. Reflection and mirroring are commonplace. These metaphors appear literal. Concepts that are never too far away from the regulatory mindset[16]. Knowledge is first and foremost representational in accounting. It is the assumption that features exist out-there, and the mind mirrors those features accurately through the cognitive system.

2.2.1 LITERAL FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING: SOLOMONS AND VISUAL REPRESENTATION

According to David Solomons (1978[17], 1991a, 1991b), accounting was to function as a map: a map of corporate activity (Solomons, 1978, p. 35). The map analogy is a good figure. It expresses that accounting should function as an accurate, cartographic representation of corporate reality[18]. Accounting rules should guide the decisions of economic users, based on real world events. And since maps operate to give a sense of shorthand clarity on an objective world, mapping would be also a good metaphor for how financial accounting knowledge should function.

That is, the rules of accounting should correspond with real economic phenomena. They should correspond, at least, in an *appropriated* sense. The accountant should draw out certain identifiable economic features from social reality and model them. That is, the accounting should reflect those intrinsic features in financial reports:

> "Accountants, as citizens, should be as much concerned to bring about desirable changes in society or to prevent undesirable changes as anyone else. But as accountants that is not their job, and they have no special expertise in that direction. Their job is to portray certain aspects of society, not to change it. There are other and better ways to do that."

> (Solomons, 1991a, p. 294)

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[16] Yet epistemologically realist arguments appear to inherently practical: "Foundationalism has some appeal in standard setting, partly because it promises to free us from some difficult problems." (Shapiro, 1998, p. 657).

[17] "Accounting should emulate a well-calibrated speedometer in clocking the real economic 'roadspeed' of a business entity" (Tinker, 1991, p. 298, citing Solomons, 1978, p.37). Tinker suggests that accounting should "not make the news" (Solomons. 1991). That the qualitative criterion for the success is how much the map corresponds to politically, socially and economically shaped map (Solomons, 1991).

[18] The way accountants capture with shorthand, reductive images/concepts result in what Mouritsen has called a "weak visualization", that requires ever greater support from the investing community: "It is precisely because the financial statement is a weak visualization that it needs allies." (Mouritsen, 2011, p. 234)

That is, accounting information should describe/represent accurately those socially produced aspects of society through concepts such as asset, liability, or profit. Through taking a somewhat passive, reflective position, the accountant should report on the key facts. Such aspects of profit, loss, wealth, assets and liabilities should be reported on in a clear and consistent manner. And this would then strengthen the will of accounting standard setters in the future to develop strong, descriptive representations of reality.

2.3 ACCOUNTING AS METAPHOR

2.3.1 ACCOUNTING AS A SYSTEM OF SIGNS

However, that financial accounting is a mirror has provoked criticism. The idea of accounting as a passive, indifferent empirical and literal reflection of reality, came to be seen as a way of supporting certain sections of society. Tinker (1991) argued that accounting was simply one type of specialized language. However, it was one that functioned no differently from any other discourse (See also Arrington and Francis, 1989, Burchell, et al, 1980, Francis, 1990, Funnel, 2007, Graham, 2014). Accounting, as a language, had the potential to construct worlds[19]. Using Ferdinand De Saussure's structural linguistics and Derrida's views on post-structuralism (See Derrida, 1974, 1982), Tinker argued that accounting representations distorted knowledge of what was *really* out-there. The financial account was not a transparent medium per se. The accountant played an active part in the production of a one sided, partisan representation, of what really was happening. It was, by and large, metaphorical.

Accounting functioned in a *particularly* metaphorical way. Accounting, less than a passive and reflective by-standing type of knowledge gathering activity, actually gave meaning, structure and shape to the world it sought to represent (Tinker, 1982, 1986, 1991)[20]. The metaphor, *accounting-as-a-language,* revealed that accounting could potentially be a subjective scheme for *organizing* reality. Accounting as a language is metaphorical, in this

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[19] This ideological assessment of accounting as the "language of praxis in business" is still on-going in the accounting literature (See Bryer, 2012, p. 513).

[20] Other studies at this time somewhat supported this view: (Chua, 1986, Jackson and Wilmott, 1987). Chua (1986) saw accounting theory affected by hypothetito-deductivism or scientific approaches to research. Approaches that would diminish active and purposeful participation. That scientific methodological approaches have a stranglehold on accounting research. And this has largely affected the way in which accounting research is done. This has had an impact on what Chua sees as theory grounded in the scientific method. Hence, hypothetico-deductive pursuits become part of what is normal in accounting research: "methodological choices are always made, perhaps unconsciously or through default" (p. 593).

understanding of metaphor. The economic reality, rather, was *given* meaning through the type of language it chose to represent commercial reality. As Tinker declares:

"The world has to be made to mean."

(Tinker, 1991, p. 305)

On this view, accounting would paint a picture of knowledge of financial reality. Accounting basically deduced from economic theory what the members of a society were like: how those individuals behaved in the world, and how their interests should be served (see Young, 1996). Accounting regulators who create accounting concepts made bold, ontologically political assertions about what social reality *was really* like. Because this was partial or even untrue, accounting as a language was a metaphor; where knowledge derived from applying, shaping, cutting and configuring a social world amenable to certain sectional societal groups.

As Tinker explained, policies have always been based on assumptions that were initially contestable/metaphorical (Tinker, 1986). And how institutional interests have distorted accounting signification depends on the perspective that accounting favors. Financial accounting was,

"Susceptible to biases and distortions."

(Tinker, 1991, p.301).

Tinker's position recognized that accounting helped to maintain the capitalist status quo (Willmott et al, 1993). Accounting rules did not reflect economic truths or hold a mirror to financial reality in a passive sort of empirical way, but rather sought to shape and give meaning to it.

Consequently, knowledge of events and transactions was not a visual representation at all. By endorsing vision metaphors of mirrors and maps in order to support sectional user interests, standard setters would conceal the extent to which corporate pressure influenced accounting policy making (Tinker, 1991, p. 302). Lehman and Tinker (1987), for example, defined financial accounting as simply a "hegemonic force" in the distribution of social income:

"A symbolic, cultural and hegemonic force, in struggles over the distribution of social income."

(Lehman & Tinker, 1987, p. 503)

According to Tinker, accounting endorsed accounting knowledge as correspondence between actual facts and the accounting description[21], even though accounting was:

> "An ideology, a way of rationalizing or explaining away the appropriation of the production of one class by members of another [which makes it]] an intellectual and pragmatic tool in social domination."

> (Tinker, 1985, cited in Dillard, 1991 p. 21).

Given Tinker's argument that there was no natural economic feature that accounting descriptions reflected, accountants were in some sense developing knowledge relative to the language/scheme it *chose* to use. Accounting as a language was metaphorical.

There was no external referent to which the accountant referred. So paradoxically for Tinker[22], it was Solomons himself who provided support for his own (Tinker's) position:

> "Solomons himself provides one of the most convincing cases against representational faithfulness and confirming the arbitrariness of accounting signs, in his advocacy of current cost over historical cost accounting."

> (Tinker, 1991, p. 303).

The idea of accounting's representational faithfulness to reality, for Tinker, was loosely based on a set of subjective, "arbitrary assumptions"[23]. All in all, there was no such thing as transcendental, absolute knowledge of economic affairs for accounting regulation; accounting had to be an arbitrary and metaphorical system by which humans applied their language in dealing with the world:

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[21] Lakoff and Johnson explain that the correspondence theory in its simplest form is as follows "A statement is true when it fits the way things are in the world. It is false when it fails to fit the way things are in the world" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p.98).

[22] This debate is interesting at least because it shows how fervently we tend to argue about analogies: Tinker says, "Solomons' automobile speedometer analogy poorly reflects financial reporting situations". Tinker shows he understands the meaning of Solomons' metaphor by going on with it: "The example would be more appropriate if the speedometer was wired to the local police station to monitor the driver's speed. Drivers would then be tempted to tamper with speedometer readings to avoid detection and prosecution" (p.299). Tinker shows he understands the assumed meaning of Solomons' paper, and carries on using the metaphor in full. He continues on, "History cautions us with many tales about the fate of messengers who betray their trust…. The salutary variant on 'shooting the messenger' should serve as a warning to the profession…unless it acts expeditiously it may also suffer a spectacular martyrdom" (p.306).

[23] "Far from being Representationally Faithful, his [Solomons] posture is both evangelical and partisan - albeit unintended - in advancing specific economic interests and beneficiaries." (Tinker 1991, p. 305)

"Representational faithfulness can only be justified by a process of infinite regression to ever higher criteria of validation. In this sense, it has no final authority and is based on an arbitrary assumption."

(Tinker, 1991 p 304)

Solomons raised issues with Tinker's position, denouncing them, as "philosophical obfuscation" (1991b, p. 311). For Solomons, financial accounting was not attempting to create an "Archimedean" point of view of a pre-structured reality. Instead, distortion in knowledge of real-world phenomena was part of the act of knowledge construction[24]. Tinker also raises this point, using the German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno's views:

"In Adorno's terms, there is no "Archimedean point of origin" for representations to be faithful to"

(Tinker, 1991, p. 303).

This view is held up in Solomons' cartographic metaphor too, which draws attention to the reality of reality itself[25]; how in the act of gaining knowledge appropriation is a necessary part of the knowledge production process. Thus, Solomons asserted:

"It is unnecessary for Tinker to assert that accounting measures are socially constructed and socially enactive."

(Solomons, 1991b, p. 312)

Overall, for Tinker (1991), the Saussurean viewpoint, that which held that accounting did not hold a mirror to reality, was sufficient to claim that accounting was merely a "discretionary" sort of sign system that functioned in a subjective and partial way. Accounting was metaphorical because it applied a business-like language *to* the world[26].

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[24] Solomons assesses his own view, and argues how the aim, particularly, of "radicals[24]" like Tinker came to emphasize the importance of accounting as a changer and shaper of social and economic arrangements rather than a reflector of economic events and objects: "As I have said, what the radicals really want to change is our present form of society and its values. Their attempts to change accounting are almost incidental to their main purpose. How you view radical accounting will therefore depend largely on how you view our present social and economic arrangements." (Solomons, 1991, p, 291)

[25] That it is fundamentally complex, it is ontologically difficult to grasp, and therefore can only be appropriated. Maps do not represent all features, but are basically short hand models. The map has to therefore include some things, but exclude others.

[26] It is assumed this new approach would open engagement with the wider community, who would then serve in updating the mapping metaphor to incorporate different social groups and their experiences of travelling the economic terrain: "Since likeness is given by the set of competing producers or participants, would it not be an interesting strategy to have as many as people as possible have a say in the construction of the likeness?" (Mouritsen, 2011, p. 234)

Accounting regulators constructed knowledge of reality, arbitrarily applying a language to phenomena:

> "There is an authoritative semiotic case for recognizing the quasi-independent (discretionary) status of accounting "signs": Saussure's Principle of "the arbitrariness of signs" (Saussure, 1960)."

> (Tinker, 1991, p. 302)

2.3.2 ACCOUNTING AS MAKER OF SOCIAL REALITY

Accounting regulation was deemed a fundamentally metaphorical enterprise. Accounting functioned as a conceptual scheme for organizing reality to fit ownership interest. This was because the discretionary nature of signs implied that there was no outside, which accounting reflected. Tinker's position advocated the quasi-independency of language from phenomena, and the motivation for free access to signs, and henceforth the emancipation from presumed inequity and bias of the accounting system. Rather than getting the outside to the world of real things, accounting signs functioned independently (autonomously) from an objective, external reality. Accounting was simply a metaphor, where metaphor was understood in terms of the autonomy of signification to make worlds:

> "Saussure's principle highlights the independence (autonomy) of signification from economic reality"

> (Tinker, 1991, p, 303).

The danger for Tinker was that these dominating *languages* have power to cement unfair social conditions/practices. This view holds that over time, the winners have their way with language, where society fails to recognize the initially contested, metaphorical or arbitrary beginnings of the organizing scheme. This is a point the thesis agrees with to some extent. Since metaphors over time become so commonplace, so entrenched, the accounting scheme that is used becomes the way of ordinarily "seeing" that reality. What society views as a literal, scientific or a faithful representation is the construction of an idea; that there is but one reality that practices reflect. The danger, Tinker notices, is how a language, can, over time, "reify" the very social conditions we live with. So that, these conditions are actually expressed in terms of function. Metaphors are "used" to "manipulate" the social imagination:

> "Metaphors may be used to manipulate the social imagination by reifying social conditions"

(Tinker, 1986, p. 378)

Overall, this reified view reflects the singular power of language as evidence of the power humans have to hold social conditions, our material reality, in place. This position sees accounting, as one of these quasi legal languages, as a meaningful starting point to examine accounting regulation; by merely tackling concepts as language, that arise from within the profession, and viewing external constraints on language as unimportant. To fundamentally re-order society with the signs and rules it has at its disposal, accounting must be viewed as a weak sort of language (a metaphorical one) that can be replaced, to re-order anew, and re-order our beliefs and overturn unfair social practices.

Other critical accounting research appears to conform to a similar line of thinking about metaphor. That there could not be[27] an all-encompassing objective, guiding objective reality that influences metaphors: a visual knowing that gets the researcher outside of collective thinking to the thing in itself, independently of subjective, human thought. Knowing is rather an *outcome* of subjects, of *their* thought, and language where subjects cannot see past the end of their cognition, discourse and practices. Overall, at least as it appears as some kind of reflecting surface, accounting did, and does not, conform to a mind-independent reality. There was no representational faithfulness, and there existed no correspondence between accounting sign and objective economic reality. Accounting signs effectively construct[28] the world, and the beliefs, we have, and share. Accounting is a fundamentally metaphorical activity because it applies rules and establishes order, rather than reflect with rules and concepts.

This view is advocated again in other accounting papers that attempt to show how accounting is a deeply metaphorical activity, but presume a justificatory rather than causal understanding of metaphor. That if language is metaphorical, in this latter sense, language can be accessible and knowable enough that society can change it, alter it, without of course, changing the social reality prior. There is a notion of ease, or access, to languages that hold social realities in place.

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[27] "Another source of confusion in trying to interpret Tinker's views stems from the fact that most of the sins of capitalism, as he sees them, are visited on the heads of accountants." (Solomons, 1991, p. 288)

[28] Construction might be understood in a negative sense (contrived, one-sided) rather than a literal sense, of building or making something that requires honest efforts.

2.3.3 ACCOUNTING SUSTAINS SOCIAL REALITY

Hines' (1988, 1991, 1992), would also invigorate the internal problematic correlation between accounting thought and world. In this argument, Hines confined accounting knowledge of objects to the capitalist system that accounting supported and sustained: profit, loss and wealth maximizing behavior. Again, Hines explained that accounting rules constructed economic identities where there previously were none. That accounting regulators did not have any special kind of access to some economic feature. But what they did have access to, however, was to their own coherent, intersubjective thought/thinking. In that case, Hines' argument was that accounting could potentially produce numerous/plural 'realities', if *we*, could think them differently.

> "Remember, we are creating reality. We do not have to be constrained by the everyday way of thinking – it is just a way of thinking, can't you see? As ordinary people, we arbitrarily combine, and define, and add, and subtract things from our picture of reality. As professional people we arbitrarily combine, and define, and add, and subtract things…"

> (Hines, 1988, p. 254)

This is also an ontological argument here. Asserting that before we have any sort of accounting at all, "there is just a jumble" (Hines, 1988, p. 255)[29]. This idea of reality as a jumble, or lump is the "scholastic view" (Morton, 2013, p. 9). It is view that subscribes to a "European thinking… that they [substances] are basic lumps decorated by accidents" (Morton, 2013 p. 9); a philosophy, Morton describes, that derives from Immanuel Kant. It is where human subjects assume the capacity to gain knowledge through a-priori categories of space, time, and what is known as the transcendental ego. It limits accounting knowledge as vision of the external world to the internal thought processes of groups of individuals; to the confines of internal group or intersubjective thought, to the inside world of socially held norms and customs.

Knowledge of (shared) human representation is what makes knowledge (internal). Not a different kind of knowledge. Not a knowledge built on a more common-sense foundation of essences that are outside and visible. But one in which human need, coordination and the

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[29] The ontological argument is based on a Cartesian understanding of matter: objects are lumps to which descriptions give shape and meaning to these meanings. In the words of Tim Morton (2013), the object is a like a cupcake which we cover in sprinkles.

sustaining of lifeworld conditions is crucial for certain societal groups to flourish - to have the world appear a certain way, for them:

> "Everything would be a mess without us. Just a jumble. No-one would know where they were."

> (Hines, 1988, p. 255).

Because Hines believed the real world to be a mere "jumble" for the accountant, policy makers could find different concepts/schemes with which to make sense out of that jumble. The realities accountants created were perhaps biased or politically motivated (See also Cooper and Sherer 1984), and therefore, could be created otherwise. Since accountants appeared to be combining, defining, accruing and deducting things, accountants were also cutting, dividing and slicing the world in order to give meaning *to it*. Therefore, accountants could potentially find other ways to give endless structure and coherence to these passive jumbles.

Hines appeared to suggest that accountants constructed reality "metaphorically", since there is a notion of that we view language as a metaphor where we easily understand our metaphors, can alter them anew. Financial accounting regulators assumed to give structure to, even make, reality out of a lumpy world[30], and therefore, accessing these schemes, unlocking them, changing them, is assumed to be unconstrained. Accounting rules inscribed on the surface of those lumps economic identities; and that there could be a completely new of describing that world. Overall for Hines, reality is completely cordoned off to the local positions of subjective thought residing within the specialty of a particular practice. Hines even goes so far as to tackle scientific claims in this respect,

> "Black holes are an idea, a metaphor, a concept. Like atoms. Like electrons, Like organizations! These things help structure our lives. Ideas. Where would we be, without ideas?"

> (Hines, 1988, p. 253)

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[30] Therefore, subjectivist discourse implies that we are more often wrong than correct given that concepts are not guided through the inputs of external reality. In fact, financial accounting is probably more correct than wrong: "It may be argued that in some sense capitalist society is itself distorted or perverse, but this does not mean that accounting as a language gives a seriously distorted view of capitalist society. On the contrary, accounting as a language surely makes the, arguably perverse, priorities, interests and values of capitalism quite clear. We should be especially skeptical of any suggestion that the truth is distorted by language: "Our languages do not distort the truth about the world, though of course they allow us to deceive ourselves and others, according to predilection" (McKernan, 2007, p. 170)

More extreme constructivist positions can be found in the accounting literature, appearing to present a view that society has the power to see clearly our metaphors, and seek to change them through a presumed access to the representations we make. The failure of objectivity through the collapse of essence and the idea of any world-influence on our language is persuasive. In spite of this these positions may appear to support an idea that metaphors are overt, noticeable, conscious even, that implies access to the things we make, social constructions, and to alter and shape them subjectively within our field of reason.

In the next part, Gareth Morgan's views are explored in this respect, as a case in point. Morgan's view on organizational reality is used as an example from the accounting academic literature to show how this thinking about metaphor becomes a form of restricted access only to the social constructions/representations. It is acknowledged that the functional use of metaphor in the context of organizational studies can be observed in Morgan's thinking. Morgan seemed to advance similar constructivist/metaphorical views, arguing for a metaphorical pluralism, where different, subjective representations subjects apply to objects, such as organizations, and where access and change is presumed. Where the subjective, metaphorical representations that are ascribed to them, and to phenomena generally, are revealed, this a particular way of thinking about metaphor as arising from an epistemological subject, culture or society, which is upheld as sovereign, without factoring in the constraint of world.

2.4 METAPHORS IN ACCOUNTING: GAINING ACCESS TO SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS

As an example of this idea of fitting or applying metaphors, Gareth Morgan's views on metaphor seemed to be extending a similar view of metaphor (Morgan, 1980, 1988, 2014a and b). In a series of studies concerning the metaphorical nature of accounting descriptions, Gareth Morgan (1980, 1988, 2014a and b) provided much insight into the metaphor making that appeared in accounting and organizational studies. Morgan explained why metaphors are important to study:

> "The use of a metaphor serves to generate an image. This image can provide the basis for detailed scientific research based upon attempts to discover the extent to which features of the metaphor are found in the subject of inquiry."

> (Morgan, 1980, page, 611).

It seemed that in order to interpret organizations[31], researchers would have to see an organization as a sort of blank slate, onto which a variety of different representations had been applied. In order to *read* organizations for their subjective, cultural representations: it is conducive to study the human representations that societies have applied to those objects (organizations in Morgan's case); where representations are nothing more than metaphors, where metaphors, again, are understood in this sense of the subjective or the arbitrary that are outcomes of the subject's free will to construct different and many possible and relative identities which lies at the heart of subjectivist/postmodernist thinking.

Morgan's research addressed the role that image-making has played. The role metaphors have played in the formulation of organizational realities. Showing how we fail to adequately grasp any intrinsic feature of an organization, Morgan showed that an organization embodies a collection of different subjective representations, revealing the lack of essence on which reference depends. That is, Morgan mainly urges a way of seeing organizations. Organization are merely vehicles or carriers of meaning.

Cultural biases have gone into shaping the *appearance* of the organization. The organization functions more or less, again, as a carrier of social representations[32]. And so, the way of knowing this organization utilizes methodologies that access these social constructions, not the real/essence of the organization, but social representations. As Morgan explained:

> "There is a difference between the full and rich reality of an organization, and the knowledge we are able to gain about that organization…We can use metaphors and theories to grasp and express this knowledge…but we can never be sure we are absolutely right"
>
> (Morgan, 1986, p. 341)

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[31] Morgan's metaphors cover eight metaphors, ranging from Organizations as Machine, Organism, Psychic Prison, Brain, Domination, Political System, Culture, and Change. See *Images of Organizations* (2006).

[32] Davis, Menon and Morgan in (1979) saw that there were four dominant schemes or images that hitherto came to shape financial accounting theory. Davis et al's paper showed that metaphors could be used to expand knowledge. This knowledge could then be taken and applied as theory in the vast majority of research in accounting. In so doing, they mentioned that: "Protagonists of each viewpoint frequently build consistent logical arguments within the framework established by their favored image for the theory and practice of accounting" (Davis, Menon and Morgan, 1987, p. 315). This view leads Davis et al to assert: "An explicit awareness that one's own approach to an accounting issue is grounded in a particular image will help the researcher to become more sensitive to the multi-faceted nature of the phenomenon being investigated and broaden and refine the strategy for research that is to be adopted" (p. 316).

In other words, according to Morgan, there is no essential organization; just a vessel for all kinds of human meaning.

Thus, for Morgan, accounting is basically a subjective way of constructing reality. Because we have to filter reality through human perception, accounting must be subjective. Since it is perception that gives a different representation from the supposed mind-independent intuition, subjectivity represents, therefore, the absence of any intrinsic "feature" which accounting can grasp. Thus, for Morgan, like others, accounting is basically a one-sided scheme: a way of structuring reality and accounting, and its concepts, is fundamentally separate from the world:

> "Accountants typically construct reality in limited and one-sided ways"

> (Morgan, 1988, p. 477)

Knowledge, is again, made relative to the choice of language or organizing scheme:

> "Accountants are subjective constructors of reality"

> (Morgan, 1988, p. 477).

Other papers have adopted alternative metaphors to study accounting. These include such examples as, accounting as magic, accounting as myth, accounting as journeys, ritual, and even the conceptual framework as underwear. All papers appear to share a similar anti-realist perspective: to show how accounting is a deeply metaphorical activity that fails to have the capacity to correspond to the world (Gambling, 1977, 1987, Moore, 2009, Milne, Kearins and Walton 2006, Ezzamel, 2009 Page and Spira, 1999, respectively)[33].

These studies reveal that metaphor is useful as a tool in order to gain a new, even radical, perspective. To re-order and re-make implies a sense of liberation. In order to challenge accounting's mainstream views on vision and objectivity, understanding the subjective labels that society has applied to phenomena, the notion of accounting as a postmodern free-floating belief system is a dominant subtext. The radical freedom with which to re-shape the contours of social reality pursues a certain line of thinking that parallels relative constructivism rather than corresponding description. It is idea that accounting, as a language, as a way of structuring reality, does not rely on the world as an anchor. This leads

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[33] But at the same time, accounting has this uncanny ability to make economic worlds appear objective, neutral and value free (Ravenscroft and Williams, 2009).

to a view that objectivity, and this might as well extend to vision and knowledge, in accounting, is virtually a myth:

"The idea of objectivity in accounting is largely a myth."

(Morgan, 1988, p. 477)[34].

For Morgan's position, the object must have little or no determining influence on the labels/representation given to the social object. Morgan argued that there is no inherent feature since the construction is done by human concepts. And because of this, what is important to study are the representations which society (subjects) have applied to that object/the firm. The will, the purpose, the desire even, to have things the way they are, for us, for the subject, takes up a position much like that of the artist who follows rules in order to apply paint to a blank canvas (See, Mouck, 2004). The artist who gives meaning and purpose to the *blankness* of the canvas assumes the construction process.

Therefore, there is a key underlying assumption in Morgan's approach. Morgan's analysis suggested that it is important to study the representations as metaphorical characterizations *given/applied* to these organizations; given by willing human collective/individual subjects[35]. The aim is to reveal how identities of organizations are socially constructed by subjects possessing perhaps different cultural backgrounds. And how social representations benefit certain social groups over others. It is that culture/society basically *projects* those images/metaphors onto another object (organization) - for its (society's) own needs – that reveals the way in which accountants carve the world. Society, significantly, finds the label viable/suitable to its own desires, to which it has access to carve anew. Consequently, it is up to researchers to study these subjectively projected *representations* as culturally bound representations that reveal the different arrangements that are projected.

Overall, there is something lacking in this analysis. For Morgan, the object's qualitative dimensions are not really *part of* the organization. The organization becomes only a starting point for *interpretation.* Because accounting is assumed not to reflect because accountants

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[34] Pinder and Bourgeois (1983, p. 610) in a reply to Morgan, asserted that "our view, is in fact, a Post-Kantian one, based human finitude. We hold that there is no single reality that causes our perceptions but that there is no way of knowing whether or how our perceptions correspond to exactly to *it*, but only to thought. Each of us does indeed construct the world, but this does not create the sort of subjectivity to which some constructivists are committed". Pinder and Bourgeois claim that Morgan is an "extreme constructivist" and points out "Morgan must adopt some philosophical and linguistic viewpoint for constructing and considering theories of administrative science, as must we all" (p.610).

[35] "Similarly, there are rules of linguistic usage that are relative to certain groups. The point is that we do see tropes as deliberate departures from standard usage, but that hardly makes us the sort of extreme non-constructivists Morgan seems to be criticizing….as we noted more than ten times in our paper, figurative terminology is ubiquitous in ordinary language". (Pinder and Bourgeois, 1983, pp. 609-611)

project, make and shape reality, researchers could therefore investigate the organization as a spectrum of various relative shades of human representation, various phenomenological perspectives. Accounting, again, is a language that functions to structure what is essentially a lump, a jumble or a plastic, malleable substance. In Morgan's 1986 book, it is written:

> "The use of metaphor implies a way of thinking and a way of seeing that pervade how we understand the world generally"

> (Morgan, 1986, p. 12)

It seems that representation - not the object as extra-linguistic –is central. The representation is not really what the organization *is*. But is merely evidence of the application of labels in order to make sense out of the presumed vast complexity of narratives of what an organization really *is*[36].

2.4.1 ACCOUNTING AS A HUMANIST PRAGMATIC WILL

Boland (1989) shared a similar position to Morgan's. Boland acknowledged that Gareth Morgan's *'Images of Organization'* (1st ed. 1986, 2nd ed.1997) was a starting point for researchers wanting to overcome dominant accounting positions, such as those associated with the non-constructivist scientific objectivity. With its claims of unbiased objective neutrality, such appeals assumed the tenets of objectivist cognition. The idea that accounting as a language that is metaphorical (where metaphor is understood to mean subjective, free will of human subjects) is again expressed.

Thus, Boland in this respect drew connections between pragmatic philosophers (such as the American philosopher Richard Rorty) and accounting researchers (Gareth Morgan) in order to highlight the importance of challenging 'foundational epistemology':

> "One major theme in Rorty's work is to argue against the quest for a foundational epistemology and against the notion that philosophers should be able to provide us a "permanent neutral framework" for making accurate representations of the world."

> (Boland, 1989, p. 595)

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[36] As Morgan and Spicer (2011, p. 253) write, "interpretive approaches to change are interested in the ongoing processes, lived experience, local narrative and the construction of change", meaning that consistent interpretation is required for understanding the incomplete nature of things. This later point the thesis is in agreement.

Drawing on similarities between Gadamer's hermeneutics and Richard Rorty's pragmatist view on analytic philosophy, Boland argued:

> "One major theme of Rorty's work is to argue against the quest for a foundational epistemology and against the notion that philosophers should be able to provide us a 'permanent neutral framework' for making accurate representations of the world"

> (Boland, 1989, p.595)

Overall, Boland suggested that if we want to challenge some of accounting's descriptive claims, we should turn to Morgan's' metaphors.

> "The theme of textual interpretation that is central to the hermeneutic turn in the social sciences is strongly evident in a recent book by Morgan (1986)".

> (Boland, 1989, p.593)

Boland states, "that the linguistic turn taken by (positive) analytic philosophy is credited by Rorty as an important impetus to the interpretive, social constructionist themes reflected in Morgan's book" (p.596). Therefore, as Boland sees it, both Gadamer and Rorty are 'pre-conditions for Morgan's Images of Organizations' (p. 596).

> "Taking a hermeneutic turn in the social sciences means approaching the social world as a text that is alien and unfamiliar: a text with significance and meaning that will emerge only through interpretation…Thus theory does not stand apart from action as the objective, impersonal embrace of a subjective and personal performance. Rather, theory and action are inextricably bound and emerge from a common field of language practice".

> (Boland, 1989, p. 592)

This meant that the researcher was able to construct another representation quite independently in order to achieve distance from such supposedly objectivist claims, thereby focusing on studying the object and all its attendant metaphors (See also Boland and Greenberg, 1992). Following such an account, the object here is reduced to a kind of verse or piece of literature, an object, whose essential qualities could not be features in themselves, but merely labels. These are rather like socially applied labels that subjects have given to objects:

"The process through which we come to an understanding of the world is an interplay of our tradition and the world-as-a-text, an interplay known as the hermeneutic circle".

(Boland, 1989, p. 595)

Overall, the object, for example, an organization, *carries multiple meanings* that can close read like a text in order to study some of the cultural understandings that have been projected *onto* the organization. The features of the organization itself, what it is or does, is largely unimportant. What is rather important is that, the organization, object or phenomenon in question, can be studied in order to understand what it *means*. That is, what it means to that society or culture assumes a lost capacity to say what it really is. The object can be read for how it *carries* (is a container for) human representations. The organization exists as a sort of vehicle for human representation. This is because what is accessed is the subjective reference point, the representation, given to the other. Not speculating the true features that the thing/event/object possesses, but accessing the culturally subjective meaning(s), representations are assumed applied to objects. It is humans and their collective will, to have it as they wish, that is central to the study of metaphor.

Overall, the hermeneutic position judges the effectiveness of our claims based on the difference between good and bad descriptions given the absence of any point of reference. Boland, like Morgan, assumed no inherent real feature; no feature to which we actually correspond our languages:

"Any interpretive act is based upon personal understandings as to how familiar images and metaphors are to be used in interpreting events, how power relations are manifested in a particular situation, and what norms of morality, law and custom are to be honored."

(Boland, 1993, p. 126)

It appears that the freedom of idea and the infinite correlation between thought and world fosters a will to change: to assail scientific objectivity. To get to a new representation, a new language, *accounting as a language* should be viewed metaphorically, but in a very specific sense. It should be viewed as freely replaceable, at will. Strangely, the accounting literature pronounces this view when financial reality becomes more confusing, more abstractly non-representational.

2.4.2 LOSING ACCESS TO SOCIAL REALITY

Nonetheless, as more extreme positions have gained prominence epistemological insecurity has hastened. This insecurity may rest on this premise that language is metaphorical in a specific sense: that language *functions* to order, shape and give meaning *to* realities. Since Western society connects language with vision (the mirror of reality), critics hasten to get rid of this position's inadequacies and iniquities, and instead, usher in epistemological doubt.

Continuing with this theme, this part now considers a different position, where access to socially produced things, such as representation, is not readily presupposed. This position argues that financial reality has escaped the thoughts and views of accountant regulation, that society, now fail, to gain any kind of access to financial reality. And this type of thinking can be summarized by the late Norman Macintosh's papers on accounting as simulacrum, in which access to socially produced realities, including our languages, is not so automatically straightforward.

Macintosh's papers influence the reader to consider the extremely postmodernist writings of the French sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard[37]. Macintosh's concerns with Baudrillard's work does appear to shake up any scientific or literal explanation of financial reality, where knowledge does not derive from simply mirroring real world events[38].

For Macintosh, knowledge in accounting is problematized by a continuing faith in the realism and the objectivity of financial markets. It is where a peculiar financial world escapes

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[37] As the philosopher Graham Harman states: "Baudrillard is correct that modern philosophy 'has always lived off the splendor of the subject and the poverty of the object'. The object has been treated as dead matter occupying some specific set of spatial-temporal coordinates, while all hope of novelty has seemed to lie on the side of the human subject, with all its hallowed features: perception, rationality, cunning, dignity, autonomy." (Harman, 2010, p. 131). And with it, a viewing subject that assumed it could look at things and obtain a good image began to be "fascinated by something not entirely real". "Baudrillard even cites Jean-Paul Sartre saying much the same thing: that I do not wish to be a disembodied subject dominating my victim as object but to become a fascinating object in my own right. This entails the wish to be taken for a fascinating appearance, for something that in fact I am not. But for the most part, this remains a mere desire. What I actually am qua subject is a *real* object, fascinated by something that is not entirely real." (Harman, 2010, p. 133).

[38] As the philosopher Graham Harman states, Baudrillard conceived of the world as quite strangely virtualized. So that what Harman observes in Baudrillard is an ontological object-oriented turn. The world was no longer a substance that would no longer stand to be passively reflected by an empirical knowing subject, a subject that normally withdrew into a space of solitude and pure thought, allowing the good picture to manifest in mind. The "outlook is that the world that the world is not one thing that would be susceptible to the old fashioned empirical detection, but in fact a far more complex, multidimensional, and multiple entity than usually thought" (Viljanen, 2009, p. 18). For Baudrillard, the viewed upon object over time began to seduce, evade and escape knowledge: There is not a single out-there world, but rather parallel real worlds" (Viljanen, 2009, p. 18). The irreducible object that Baudrillard spoke of would seduce the very subject, that previously just looked at things in an attempt to accurately represent what was given to perception. "[Baudrillard] draws our attention to something equally important: the specific relation between the sensual object and the beholder who is engrossed by it. Baudrillard's name for this relation between observer and object is *seduction*, which strikes me as a perfectly good technical term despite its hint of empty hipsterism. Seduction is Baudrillard's proposed counterweight to the subject-centered concept of *desire*, thus paving the way for replacing the exhausted modern tradition of the subject with an object-oriented theory that Baudrillard treats as the only alternative path. Closely linked with this concept of seduction is what Baudrillard, anticipating Alain Badiou's re-working of Kierkegaard, calls the *wager*. For Baudrillard, to give in to the seductive power of a given object is to wager our lives on its importance in a manner that, contra Badiou, *cannot* be rationally demonstrated." (Harman, 2010, p. 131)

accounting concepts that seek to describe and control them, and where a profound suspicion of visual knowledge exists[39]:

> "If there is a common denominator to the above concerns about the present condition of accounting, it is that of a crisis of representation along with a deeply felt loss of faith in the ability of accounting statements to any longer represent to approximate something in itself such as income or capital"
>
> (Macintosh, 2000, p.5)

In a particular joint authored paper, Macintosh, Shearer, Thornton and Welker (2000) assess the problems for accounting's visual knowledge from two perspectives. The first perspective is that there is an ontological problem: financial reality is largely complicated mainly down to the increasing financialization of the economy (See Sikka, 2009, Cooper, 2015, Zhang and Andrew, 2014). The second perspective is a methodological problem: the double entry accounting system is deeply flawed. To be more precise, double entry gives an inaccurate representation of the organization. This inevitably leads to a deeper epistemological problem: subjects fail to know real situations because the method - double entry accounting - is defective.

> "The accepted vocabulary of income and capital remains grounded in beliefs and assumptions that formed during the production era, while accounting practice clings to double entry techniques that emerged nearly five centuries ago in the counterfeit era."
>
> (Macintosh, et al, 2000, p. 29)

Overall, this paper points out that that the financial accounting system has made it difficult for these previously known qualities *to be* known. Again, like previous literature, Macintosh et al (2000), argue that accounting thought does not reflect the commercial environment, as

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[39] According to Macintosh (2003), accounting models find it difficult to make an image out of financial, global capitalism: "Many of today's finance and accounting theories are no longer adequate to deal with many of the important issues confronting capital markets today. Perhaps this is not so surprising given that they are based on antiquated presuppositions about the relation between accounting signs and underlying referents" (Macintosh, 2003, p. 461). And this complexity can lead to undesirable consequences for accountants (Okamoto, 2011). Accountants who have to access, gain knowledge of, and represent fundamentally complex market realities. The complexity renders proper accounting systems anachronistic. "It is certain that the recent widespread situation of complex corporate transactions such as derivatives and accompanying rules-based accounting standards make truth or objective reality in accounting obscure." (Okamoto, 2011, p. 239).

it has become too confusing, too groundless (See also McGoun, 1997 and Okamoto, 2011[40]) and that it is at odds with it, even denying it through silence (see Chwastiak and Young, 2009).

> "The simulation era market-based capital, which must represent and be endogenous with capital in financial markets, and the simulation era income, with its perceived exogeneity and predictability, are clearly at odds within the traditional accounting model."

> (Macintosh et al, 2000, p. 39)[41]

Macintosh and Baker (2002) explore this problematic specifically in relation to accounting for oil and gas. Here the authors advocate less of an "expressive realism" (essentially an epistemological realism), that they argue appears in conventional "mono-logic" accounting[42] (Macintosh and Baker, 2002, p. 207). Yet, as Macintosh explains, financial accounting's realism continues on without any notion of an external referent. Thus, increasing attempts to add a sense of realism through notions of transparency seems largely "inconsistent"[43]:

> "Accounting regulators today know they cannot ignore the depiction of the more fundamental things that go into any computation of income and capital. But their approach to addressing the issue of financial statements should reflect underlying events and transactions in a transparent manner seems inconsistent with the nature of

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[40] It does not lead to the implication of the non-objective, and perhaps, accounting ultimately subjective: "This concept is founded on his belief that poststructuralist accounting scholars should not see their approaches as falling into the abyss of nihilism, such as believing that accounting is meaningless, but need to develop new final vocabularies and discourses for understanding the state of accounting in contemporary society (Macintosh, 2006, p. 30), in (Okamoto, 2011, p. 237)

[41] According to Macintosh et al (2000), new ages, like our more advanced technological age, creates difficulties for the accounting model. The model has lost its ability to reflect economic realities. Accounting models cannot build an accurate representation of this, what McGoun (1997) calls, a hyperreal economy. Therefore, financial accounting finds it difficult to obtain a good image of some quality that was presumed to be there in the past[41]. Macintosh and Shearer explain the gradual abstraction of financial accounting representation that has occurred. Financial accounting is estranged from real things: "Very early on he [Brilloff] points out, economic thought concerned real things—land, property, and objects. It then evolved in the Dark Ages with "the development of the coin of the realm, which, to the extent it involved precious metals, might also be deemed tangible property." Next, as the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery appeared "Western economic thought proceeded to measure value in terms of abstractions, hence, doubly entry bookkeeping." This was the seed of the proliferation "at an exponential rate" of the estrangment ["alienation"] of the accounting abstractions from their putative real referents "over the intervening five centuries … attaining what may be its apogee during this 20th century." (Macintosh and Shearer, 2000, p. 10, parenthesis inserted)

[42] Macintosh and Baker explain that "In the monologic, the author dominates the characters and events. He or she knows everything about them, including things and characters themselves do not know". (p. 207)

[43] Because of this inability to get to basic truths, the authors observe that accounting has simply broken a basic covenant with society; and that the "accounting profession over the past several decades has behaved in such a scandalous manner that it has desecrated its sacred covenant with society" (Macintosh and Shearer, 2000, p. 1). Connected to the idea of simulation and obfuscation, accounting merely functions to "mask the absence of" that there ever was such a referred to covenant in the first place: "The principle that accounting has, or ever had, a sacred covenant with society that has been desecrated masks the absence of any profound referent such as a social covenant." (Macintosh and Shearer, 2000, p. 8).

accounting signs in the simulation era."

(Macintosh, et al, p. 29)

As a consequence, according to Macintosh 2000 (see Mouritsen 2011, Baker, 2011, Everett, 2011) for good overviews of Macintosh's papers), the complexity of the capitalist environment is too much. It is a confusingly strange, unwieldy system, that age old accounting systems are becoming overwhelmed by. This is mainly, as some argue, due to a monumental shift in global financial capitalism (See Boyer, 2007, Hopwood, 2009, Zhang and Andrew, 2014)[44]. The financial environment is so much more abstract than the accounting map could ever grasp.

2.5 The Financialization of the Economy and Financial Accounting

Even though financial reality is fundamentally confusing, inaccessible even, to accounting models, accounting knowledge is judged in accordance to "fidelity of signs" to world:

> "In their continued quest for transparency, then, the SEC and FASB divulge their realist ontology and the attendant conviction that accounting signs should correspond to some underlying, objective and independent reality that would be the standard for judging the fidelity of signs."

> (Macintosh et al, 2000, p.30)

For Macintosh et al (2000), financial accounting knowledge is understood in terms of a language that has to *fit* onto some external reality. This, as Macintosh demonstrates, is a concept of knowledge that can be traced back to 15th century principles where reality (states of affairs in the world) precedes the sign:

> "Similarly, accounting signs in the feudal era were transparent reflections of real objects. In the case of double entry bookkeeping in Italian City states, the merchant's inventory account, as a case in point, reflected some foundational reality such as his stock of silk or spice.

> (Macintosh, 2003, p. 457)

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[44] Mouritsen (2011, p. 235) considers whether standard setters really care about epistemological concerns: "Macintosh's interest in post-structuralist research has allowed him to question the correspondence theory associated with standard-setters' programme. Rhetorically and philosophically he is right, but do standard-setters really care about philosophical arguments?"

The task of conceptual schemes/metaphors presupposes a representational mode of thinking that exhibits some form of correspondence to affairs in the world. Principally, knowledge depends on the success of thought in mirroring (the inner eye of reason) world and applies to being truth-conditional in that what is said must correspond to facts about the world. Since accounting, over time, fails to fit with this metaphor, *Vision as Knowledge*, the conception of accounting as a mirror, in the same way as the mind is viewed as a mirror, is judged unacceptable as imitation[45]:

> "Accounting, previously concerned with recording real events and transactions such as the distribution of profit at the close of a venture, now needed to imitate the profits that would have been distributed if the company had been wound up."

(Macintosh, 2003, p. 459)

2.5.1 HYPER-REALITY AS A COMPLEX SOCIAL REALITY

This is caused by what Macintosh observes is the hyperreal economy. In this strange social reality, there is no real thing/essence to be observed or mirrored based on categories that exist in the world. In the era of hyper-reality, again, the real does not have a specific original marker or feature. And so, there is no way of telling if accounting is referring to something really real or really fictional since categories like asset or profit, are not clearly delineated.

The determination of a real feature from a contrived one is difficult in hyper-reality, since there is no real feature/category to which language acts as mirror. Because there is no origin or intrinsic feature or categorization that determines what is genuinely real and what is genuinely spurious, there is no cognitive method for differentiating a fact from a mere fabrication. That is, there is no way of telling if accounting really is referring to real/true social facts or something accounting has made present in the world.

> "Baudrillard refers to this new order as the hyperreal. By this, he simply means that society's sign realm is not real in the same sense as is the material world of objects

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[45] Macintosh proposes an alternative heteroglossic account, as an alternative. This account fragments the mono-logic accounting report (economic user perspective) into separate viewpoints. The heteroglossic account is a prototype account based on the Russian linguist Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of different voices, speakers, classes, ages and knowledges. The heteroglossic novel is basically similar to an accounting map (representation). But rather, the map recognizes that the people who use it to travel the same space in quite different ways. It appears that the travel is important, not the map. The accounting report therefore should incorporate many of these hetero-voices, many varied experiences, perspectives, and locales. And not settle on one single, proprietary perspective. Macintosh's heteroglossic account shares similarities with situated knowledges. In that values, norms, politics, the location of body-space, even phenomenologically different accounts, have a role to play in the production and reception of knowledge. Which is not radically different from Solomon's map, only in the sense that it incorporates the map at a variety of different strata in society. How different social actors use very different maps through which they navigate the same world appears to be the aim.

and things. Rather, it consists of the immaterial and the non-real. This in no way implies the end or the ''death'' of the real. It simply indicates that many signs no longer refer directly to any referent, nor do they act as a counterfeit of distinguishable referents, nor do they absorb and dominate objects as they did in previous order— they are their own pure abstractions."

(Macintosh, 2003, p. 460)

Therefore, accounting rules appear to fail to refer to real social phenomena[46]. And where there is no foundational essence to which the accounting model refers, accountants exercise a certain freedom over which signs to apply, since accountants are unable to access socially produced, ontologically subjective phenomena as they become "pure abstractions" in a post-foundationalist world. This is a new era, a confusing one, that is strangely unfamiliar to those presumed to know accurately through modelling systems of double entry accounting onto organizational anchor points:

"In this hyperreal financial economy of simulation, the difference between signs and their referents implodes. They become images of themselves in a circular, ungrounded, self-referential hall of mirrors."

(Macintosh, 2003, p. 462)

Confusion over what essences there are is endemic in Macintosh's views[47]. In hyper-reality, traditional modes of knowing and representation fail; they fail to gain access, to alter, and achieve little in the way of reflection. Representation becomes more self-referring to social creations: more self-referring to thought[48] and not to real factual events.

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[46] For the writer Jean Baudrillard, visual representational accuracy was indeed associated with much earlier periods in history, where the image of something other was a reflection of a basic underlying reality (Baudrillard, 1981). For Baudrillard, the object's features were just there, and the subject's representational abilities conformed to that object. His view is that such taken for granted claims about accurate representation gradually eroded, in a turn from earlier periods of modernity to postmodernity. Actually, according to Baudrillard, the subject's presence actually distorted the picture of the object, phase 2 of his phases of the image model. He claims that at some point very common-sense ideas about human models simply making a good image of what was actually there began gradually began to raise much doubt and suspicion. This is, where the human mind makes the idea materialize where these objects (mainly compute code become alive, and have autonomy and freedom in the world). Thus, according to Baudrillard's postmodern take on this, and similar to views held in Actor Network Theory (see Latour, 1999, Mol, 1999), the idea/concept has become real, and alive, and *in* the world (See also Baudrillard, 1999, 1994, 2005).

[47] Such would be "the successive phases of the image (Baudrillard, 1981)
    1)   It is the reflection of a profound reality
    2)   It masks and denatures a profound reality
    3)   It masks the absence of a profound reality
    4)   It has no relation to reality whatsoever; it is its own pure simulacra

[48] This might be viewed as a loss of control. Baudrillard is talking about socially created things, which we human subjects produce and that eventually escape our control/access. In *Fatal Strategies* (1990), for instance, Baudrillard predicts the advance of our future technologies that threaten our actions/behaviors. Objects eventually assault the subject. Of course, this is the major subtext of a majority of blockbuster science fiction movies. For Baudrillard, it appears that the end of the world has already happened.

According to Macintosh, in spite of hyperrealism's foreboding possibilities, accounting regulators still remain committed to developing strong deductive concepts. And these concepts remain firmly within the established tradition of faithful representation, where accounting must refer, represent and reflect. The starting point is a touchstone "logical foundation", from which future frameworks begin. These foundations, so it goes, change little over time, deriving from a basic assumption that there exists *a* reality to which signs faithfully correspond:

> "My argument is that that very idea of developing a (or discovering) a conceptual framework as a logical foundation for financial reporting rests on a very structuralist line of thinking. Such a framework, the argument holds, would consist of a set of permanent, universal, untouchable, transcendental linguistic "building blocks" that do not change (or that change slowly) with time and circumstance"

> (Macintosh, 2006, p. 27)[49]

Regulators are persistent, but their activities start to be viewed as nothing more than cosmetic (Arnold 2009, Cooper, 2015). When standard setters begin to revive claims for transparency, they affirm a strong sense of representational truth in accounting measurement. Why is this the case? Ironically it appears that financial accounting models, built on a geometric logic of duality and matching, fail to provide an accurate model of corporate reality[50]. What is the meaning of transparency then? Is it not the idea that accounting must have the correct conceptualization to have knowledge, to have access to socially produced phenomena, such as financial transactions? It seems this idea of knowledge is over. At least in the sense of metaphors of vision:

> "Accounting language is not a transparent medium but rather is the material used to manufacture accounting 'truths.'"

> (Macintosh, 2009, p. 168)

Overall, Macintosh's argument raises concerns over an armchair kind of epistemology, which presumes a philosophical reflection or realism on matters of the economy. And this is

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[49] Mattessich (2003, p. 459) writes "Baudrillard is not dealing with accounting issues, and for this reason our major concern is with the pertinent accounting interpretation offered by Macintosh et al. (2000)".

[50] By suggesting this, we can see that accounting grasps at events and tries to hold them or fit them into broad accounting definitions of asset and liability. Yet, these models fail to achieve this: "As such, then, in the case of both the liability and the expense, these accounts mask the reality that such amounts have not been paid and that no real legal liability exists. They are in the nature of sorcery"(Macintosh and Shearer, 2000, p. 615).

not enough for accounting regulation to be successful. Accounting rules should *refer* to a social reality. But this social reality has fundamentally shifted its coordinates. Fixed in a logic of accurate, literal representation, that of science and observation, accounting gestures towards some other meaning for what constitutes objective knowledge. Transparency is at a premium. And this is because accounting rules do not mirror. Consequently, knowledge, based on accounting models that seek to transparently provide access to events are, by and large, are failing to provide objective knowledge of economic events.

Macintosh located these potential problems for accounting knowledge in today's global financial economy: where technologically produced excessive forms of information "bombard" individuals, making it difficult to hold onto claims of transparency:

> "Abetted by the explosion of information-technology devices, these non-referential images literally bombard the individual with a surplus of idealized models, images and simulations of all aspects of life, work, exercise, hobbies, sports, sex, diet, even accounting"

> (Macintosh et al, 2000, p.27).

The authors therefore point out that knowledge of events as an accurate representation "seems inconsistent" in this indeterminately postmodern, technologically driven age:

> "Financial statements should reflect underlying events and transactions in a transparent manner – seems inconsistent with the nature of accounting signs in the simulation era"

> (Macintosh et al, 2000 p. 29).

Consequently, an inactive or passive sort of knowing implies a subjective live sort of computational mind reflecting an objective inanimate, yet pre-structured reality. This is gone, it appears. No longer is there any stable, inanimate out-there which accounting rules *refer*. By debunking transparency claims, Macintosh (2003)[51] sees accounting rules built foundations of epistemological realism as nothing more than folly:

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[51] Expressive realism, according to Macintosh et al, is the commonsense view of language: "it takes language to be a transparent medium …acts like a mirror to reflect reality" (Macintosh et al 2002, p. 189). Additionally, within financial accounting, Macintosh implicitly suggests that accounting is concerned more with expressing realism through the idea that accounting has a common sense view of things, expressing realism in light of real events and processes, which accounting signifies transparently: "perhaps the most prevalent view of accounting information even today sees it corresponding to some real object, activity or process which lead to real efforts (costs) and to real accomplishments (revenue) (p. 191).

"The upshot is that the quest for producing transparent accounting signs of earnings and for uncovering the underlying economic realities of firms is akin to a fool's errand".

(Macintosh, 2003, p.454)

It is recognized that the critical accounting literature fuels concern for fitting or applying language *to the* social world. And it seems intent on dismissing the faintest idea that we are as human subjects bound up with or affected on by world events that would mirror given states in the world. This results in a postmodern anxiety, within which, the world warps cognition. So much so that access to that world becomes improbable, vague and equivocal, beyond the grasp of human beings[52].

In summary, this positioning, that accounting is a metaphor, has of course been extremely persuasive[53]. The literature supports the agency of signs, and the ability of regulators to play with those signs, perhaps arbitrarily, and to obfuscate another reality behind the façade of a so-called accounting "objectivity". It shows, above all else, how accounting academia may conceive of metaphor in general terms, and, also, accounting as a language game of technical terms/jargon. The aspect of metaphor it seeks to endorse is one of function (the way we use it to replace/upset/alter beliefs), at the expense of outcome (metaphor as evidence we are in touch with our world(s)).

If language has the quality of the metaphorical (arbitrary and unstable) about it, since there is no guiding, constraining influence on such a system of rules, such as accounting, there can be no objective knowledge. Since there is no meaningful way of comparing different schemes based on a shared anchor for signs to refer. And since there is no guaranteed stable reality to guide, it is up to free thinking subjects, accounting standard setters, to change, to fashion new systems, to grasp new beliefs, and new ways of doing accounting for the better. In the next section, in an attempt to escape, to establish will over accounting language in absence of world constraint is partly what Melissa Walters calls the "prison house" of metaphor.

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[52] This view is in keeping with the scientific claim of accounting, which swings to postmodernism in order to undermine scientism. Kuhn's 1962 book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, which claims that scientific models do not mirror things in the world, but rather follows a trajectory of epistemological crisis spawning new theories and models, appears to be influential in such an account.

[53] According to Tim Morton (2013), it appears that numerous philosophical approaches, that stretch back to Descartes, with his view of substances, have concerned themselves with the basic ontology, "that they are basically lumps decorated by accidents" (Morton, 2013, p.9). As Morton explains, this ontological position, the idea of lumps, and jumbles that we "decorate" with language, "epistemology gradually takes over".

2.6 The Difficulty of Access: The Prison House of Metaphor

It is not the intention with this literature review to go through each of these alternative accounting papers that have used accounting as a metaphorical language in order to theorize about financial accounting. It is felt that Walters (2004) covers most of the central issues in thinking about metaphor in her insightful paper.

What Walters (2004) explains, overall, is that such critical viewpoints above suffer from what she calls an "epistemic fixation"[54]. Through conceiving accounting as a subjective constructor of worlds, in attempts to gain another perspective on things/to get to a new way of seeing, the literature tends to think within the confines of shared, inter-subjective thought, where metaphor use is deemed knowable and accessible, without assuming the inclusion of a guiding environment that has the capacity to affect the subject's thoughts, language and metaphors.

Walters (2004) asserts that alternative accounting thought has led to a "*metaphorical drive*", where image making is used in order to challenge current identities about what accounting *is* (See also Davis Menon and Morgan, 1982, Thornton, 1985). What Walters explains is that,

> "Alternative accounting thought perpetrates such a process of *unforgetting* in part by asserting non-stereotypical as well as antithetical metaphors for accounting, by thinking of accounting as or in terms of something unusual, unconventional or perhaps, disturbing."

> (Walters, 2004, p. 168)

Drawing on Friedrich Nietzsche's doctrine of "perspectivism"[55], Walters (2004) reveals something about the effects that metaphor has had on the mindset of accounting academia. She points out that the alternative, critical accounting literature views metaphors as tools that subjects use in order to decenter and de-stabilize. To gain access, to replace, and to re-form beliefs, there is by extension a social reality that needs re-translating. That is, attempts are

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[54] It is not only just only about seeing "the *illusion of mainstream proper…through the process of defamiliarization*", (Walters, 2004, p.168). It is also concerned with the need to constantly fixate on the subject/culture having to fixate on mirroring/distorting/fitting with, and representing things.

[55] As Cox observes, mentions of "perspectivism" in Nietzsche's text are very few indeed, so that, "one is led to wonder whether it is legitimate to claim that 'perspectivism' is a doctrine at all, let alone one central to Nietzsche's work." (See Cox,1999, p. 109)

made to develop new metaphors, in order to dismantle accounting "*propers*"[56], understood here as the mainstream realist/literal/scientific perspective:

"Alternative accounting thought ……revitalizes epistemic activity and rehabilitates its metaphoricity by bringing forward new transferences, new representations of accounting, by multiplying metaphors. The rationale for this recognition is therefore the need to understand metaphor "as a shape shifting chimera of anti-realism, anti-foundationalism, social constructionism….and modernist/and or postmodern intent"

(Walters, 2004, p.167).

Walters (2004) also explains that this will to mastery is a human condition to upset and re-form the social imagination via hierarchies, dualisms and clear identities,

"This is the 'will of the mind', an essentially unjust will to mastery, to seek similarity between one thing and another, to subdue and reduce differences, to digest and assimilate, and to achieve unity out of diversity"

(Walters, 2004) p. 175,

Metaphors are also used to subvert. For Walters, alternative accounting thinking shares a desire for liberation from what they see as unjust. Walters (2004) states that this leads to attempts to consistently overthrow so called "proper" visions/representations, and replace the existing mainstream order with a new one:

"The metaphorical drive is thus a rehabilitation and revitalization of metaphorical activity as well as an un-forgetting or unmasking of the metaphoricity that constitutes the proper"

(Walters, 2004 p.167).

Walters (2004) argues that,

"For example, consider re-presenting 'accounting as art', 'accounting as literature',

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[56] New Accounting Research (NAR) or Alternative accounting research is what Walters seems to address here. Morgan and Wilmott (1979) assert that the term ''new' accounting research could be ascribed to any accounting research that is, "self- consciously attentive to the social character of accounting theory and practice" (p. 3). This is another metaphor that attempts to de-center some scientific or technical image of accounting: "NAR contrives *to render visible*, and amplifies, accounting's wider social and historical constitution and significance as a technology of wider social and organizational control. Accounting is seen as a technology that actively (and politically) constitutes the world rather than passively (and neutrally) regulates and/or reports", (p.4)

or 'accounting as witchcraft/magic'; such metaphors are far removed from the familiar, ossified mainstream technocratic conceptualizations of accounting and antagonistic to their implications of rationality".

(Walters, 2004, p. 169)

Table 2.1: Metaphors in Accounting Research[57]	Author(s)
Accounting as Social Construction	Arnold and Oakes (1998)
	Hines (1988)
	Preston and Oakes (2000)
Accounting as Partisan	Tinker (1991)
Accounting as Politics	Burchell, Clubb, Hopwood, and Hughes (1980), Covaleski and Dirsmith (1981, 1983, 1986)
Accounting as Ideology	Cooper (1995)
	Lehman (1992)
	Lehman and Tinker (1987)
Accounting as Power	Miller and O'Leary (1987)
Accounting as Text	Arrington and Francis (1989)
	Cooper and Puxty (1994)
	Macintosh and Baker (1999)
Accounting as Metaphorical	Mouck (1992)
	Morgan (1988)
	Walters-York (1996)
	Young (1999)
Accounting as Rhetoric	Arrington and Schweiker (1992)
	Young (2000)
Accounting as Art	Galhofer and Haslam (1996)
Accounting as Magic	Gambling (1977, 1985, 1987)

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[57] *Metaphors as Theory (Adapted from Walters, 2004, p. 168)*

Accounting as Masculine	Hines (1992)
	Tinker and Neimark (1987)
Accounting as Simulacrum	Macintosh, Shearer, Thornton
	and Welker (2000)
	Preston, Young and Wright (1996)
Accounting as Show Business	Graves, Flesher and Jordan (1996)

Walters points to the emergence and importance of image-making as a crucial component in theory building. Researchers are able to use metaphors in order to re-think out of present "mainstream technocratic conceptualizations" (p. 169), to effectively seek reform from prevailing societal values/attitudes in a radically new way. This is explained via a pragmatist, "Nietzschean drive"[58] - that seeks to transform thinking.

> "Alternative accounting thought, in its broadest sense, has stood out as a bold affront to such mainstream propers by offering liberation from metaphorical fixation and dogmatism through *deliberate assertion alternative metaphors.* Such epistemic activity within alternative accounting thought may be read as a manifestation of Nietzsche's 'metaphorical drive', previously repressed in mainstream epistemic and conceptual activity…it seeks to displace and transform the norms of thought and release the intellect from its conceptual prison."
>
> (Walters, 2004, p. 166, *emphasis in original*).

This drive is similar to the Nietzschean concept of the "will to power":

> In Nietzsche's account, however, the metaphorical drive is not merely an imaginative liberating force, it is a creative force which allows us to remake the world so as to master it; that is, metaphorical activity coincides with the 'will to power'
>
> (Walters, 2004, p.170)

Overall, according to Walters, metaphor making is not an escape route to the outside world; one that can be used in order to correct a previous distortion. Rather, like a prison, metaphor making is an evident trap, one that imprisons the subjects within thought via culture,

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[58] The drive, understood here, appears to be a move towards a lack of certainty, a lack of coordination or lack of structure previously experienced in times of high modernity.

consciousness and text. Specifically, the human tools that were once thought emancipatory have become symptoms of the very problem itself:

> "But just how liberated are we? In rejecting the canonical metaphors of mainstream thought, are we privileging, fixing, and empowering others that are potentially as exclusive, appropriating, and subjugating as those we seek to depose, rejecting one set of 'propers' only to raise up another in their place? Are we thus imprisoning ourselves by the very metaphors with which we sought escape?"

> (Walters, 2004, p. 158)

Alternative accounting thought becomes trapped in a cycle of various re-cyclical metaphors (call them narratives) that attempt to represent what is effectively assumed as passive, inert, inanimate or dead. Again, the intellect must replace, or fit onto this world in order to yield a faithful representation:

> "Alternative accounting thought, in its broadest sense, has stood out as a bold affront to such mainstream propers by offering liberation from metaphorical fixation and dogmatism through *deliberate assertion alternative metaphors*…it seeks to displace and transform the norms of thought and release the intellect from its conceptual prison…Alternative accounting thought revitalizes *epistemic activity* and rehabilitates its metaphoricity by bringing forward new transferences, new representations of accounting, multiplying metaphors sic."

> (Walters, 2004, p. 166-167, *emphasis added*)

What Walters shows is that epistemology and ideology become more important considerations for accounting theorizing, rather than ontology/life world/constraint. Questions of whether representation(s) fit or do not fit become an alternative accounting "drive", which leads to more extreme views that accounting entities are mere fictions targeted for ideological critique, even held out to be the subject of ridicule (See Page and Spira, 1999):

> "The alternative accounting drive intentionally multiplies metaphors to deprive mainstream 'propers' of their exclusivity and deliberately asserts non-stereotypical metaphors to jeopardize the sovereignty of mainstream conceptual fictions and to betray and ridicule the existence of the metaphorical in supposed mainstream 'propers'".

(Walters, 2004, p. 159)

As Walters observes, image making, building new schemes, creating new metaphors, is a drive towards representation; not to get at the real per se, but in order assert a kind of epistemological dominance, basis or foundation. To seek mastery and control over other objects, is, tacit, in attempts to upset mainstream knowledge:

> "Metaphorical activity coincides with Nietzsche's 'will to power' and manifests within alternative accounting epistemic activity in the form of drives to establish and empower its alternative metaphorical representations."

(Walters, 2004, p. 159)

In this regard, Walters (2004) considers that accounting should remain committed to finding the truth, and should not "succumb to a weak will".

> "That mainstream accounting thought has found need to conceal the metaphoricity of its claims, deny the faultiness of its truths, cling to worn ideals, and take refuge not far from the tower of positivist science, is symptomatic of its weakness. Would we, as an alternative will, not be just as weak to despair in the ironies of our own position? As alternative accounting writers, we must not succumb to the 'weak' will, allowing ourselves to become trapped by the logic of our concepts or despair in the faultiness and irony of our position; nor must we denigrate the 'will to truth'".

(Walters, 2004, p. 183)

The presumed failure of accounting to get outside of thought renders the possibility of *vision as passive knowing* moot, even damaging. If Walters view is accepted, then it shows that accounting knowledge is either vision (literal) or bust (a set of perspectives/metaphors):

> "The alternative accounting drive intentionally multiplies metaphors to deprive mainstream 'propers' of their exclusivity and deliberately asserts non-stereotypical metaphors to jeopardize the sovereignty of main- stream conceptual fictions and to betray and ridicule the existence of the metaphorical in supposed mainstream 'propers'.

Walters (2004, p. 159)

Walters' focus on the spatial inside/outside conceptual metaphor (Prison/Freedom) describes this fixation with human representation as a kind of freedom, that is now turned into a 'prison house', within which the subject incarcerates itself. On this view, the subject is effectively trapped in a world of its own internal representations, never able to get outside to the realness of things, never really able to escape to external world.

According to Walters (2004), the fixation on subject and its knowledge becomes a drive to get the right sort of metaphors/schemes to fit with something jumbled, to give new meaning to that ontologically plastic world. The inside/outside conceptual metaphor signifies this loss of contact with reality through the assumed power of languages to shape worlds. And Walters employs a dualistic spatial metaphor (prison house v outside world) in order to represent the trappings of this view; what is understood to mean as a "correlationist" position:

> *"*Correlationism is subtle: it never denies that our thoughts or utterances aim at or intend mind-independent or language-independent realities; it merely stipulates that this apparently independent dimension remains internally related to thought and language"

> (Brassier, 2007, p. 51)

The prison house symbolically represents the inability to get outside of thought and gain access. It represents the inability to affect change through changing signs/labels/language, and especially culture, and subjectivity, once thought important in the postmodern/linguistic/poststructuralist or hermeneutic perspectives[59]. Here, the subject cannot exit the space of thought, and so thought traps the subject: hence the conceptual metaphor of the inside - the prison house. It is where the subject cordons off the external world, where the subject assumes a certain freedom, where subjects presume language, as metaphorical, re-orders belief, and, by extension societal values with schemes of language.

Walters seems to show this has been quite unsuccessful. Any attempt to get the right metaphors, becomes nothing more than an incarceration in a cycle of re-thought and re-interpretation. But in this anthropocentric quest for deep truths, for corrective lenses, for emancipation from dominating positions, Walters demonstrates the trappings of trying to fit metaphors/schemes onto a world that simply resists. Nihilism and despair emerge from the

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[59] Quentin Mellasioux calls correlationism is the "idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from each other" (Mellasioux, AF, 2008, p. 5)

failure to get the correct, full conceptual, literal representation; a fit with something external to thought:

> "Ironically however, through its very assertion, formation, and attempts to validate these non-stereotypical metaphors, alternative accounting thought itself tends toward the same sort of epistemic fixation and effacement it seeks to subvert. The question becomes one of whether such a Nietzschean reflection on alternative accounting epistemics leads us inevitably to nihilism and epistemological despair or rather, provides us with an affirmative foundation for the very possibility of constructing new accounting 'truths'."

> (Walters, 2004, p. 157)

The possibility for transformation through appeals to move/shift to something else is not forthcoming, and so evidence of a kind of epistemological despair remains[60]. This derives from a need to radically transform and emancipate accounting labels from mainstream "propers"/the scientific, literal assumption. This view of metaphor as a tool for emancipation provides a foundation for the possibility of constructing new accounting 'truths', which presumes an emphasis on language as a more than powerful tool for emancipation.

The literature appears to view metaphor within the context of the creative, novel and apparently obvious/conscious metaphors; where our own subjectivities and justifications create new schemes in the absence of a shared world. These would be new ways of radically representing an unstructured reality. Moreover, the way subjects understand metaphor is to show how the descriptive/scientific literal image of accounting is false: that accounting becomes an arbitrary sort of sign system that serves subjects to construct a reality who have immediate access to those linguistic constructions and from which they can radically escape to transform accounting practice.

It speculates that because there is no notion of essence, feature or category, no reality to which signs refer, accounting must be a labelling system that conforms to modernist concepts of universal categories. As a tool that transforms, metaphor is judged in terms of its effectiveness to deconstruct, to dismantle and effectively reposition the current, positivistic traditions that accounting critical theory judge unfair. Therefore, the literature

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[60] As McHale writes, "Intractable epistemological uncertainty becomes at a certain point ontological plurality or instability" (1987, p. 11)

judges a metaphor's effectiveness in terms of freedom, from liberating from apparently objective languages. However, the literature may fail to see them as a consequence of the outcomes of shared bodies interacting with a shared world, a constraining reality that places restrictions on society's freedom to use language and to reason, which places limits on such freedom.

In this next section, another earlier paper is used to counter this commonplace postmodern overview. Considering that language cannot be conceived as purely metaphorical in line with subjectivist tenets of radicalism and freedom, Cooper (1997) critiques postmodernism's rejection/denial of the real world and its escape into language/symbolic. In this sense, groups/subjects that presume accounting can radically re-alter society through changing the discourse, language/scheme imply a vagueness or ambiguity about facts in the world – the real world.

2.7 OVERVIEW: ACCOUNTING AS OVERT METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE

Cooper (1997) essentially saw a basic fundamental problem with postmodern, linguistic and hermeneutic perspectives in financial accounting. Even though financial accounting is still marked by a certain metaphysical mystique, the appeal of grand theories and narratives of truth, the certainty of the objectivity of financial markets, and the western epistemological claims of vision, rationalism and cognitive exceptionalism, there still appears to be this other, alternative view. That view is that language plays a central part in the construction of our social worlds. That language functions in absence of real, material constraints that guide language.

There are examples provided of pervasive linguistic, postmodern perspectives outlined in this review and they may tend towards wholesale rejection of concepts of vision, knowledge, truth and objectivity. In their quest to usurp these metanarrative, modernist certainties, the focus becomes centered on the power of language as the maker and shaper of beliefs for the possibility of change in absence of a meta-language/grand narrative:

> "The major historical propositions of postmodernism on the decline of grand narratives and the return to the local (Lyotard, 1984); the rise of the empty symbol or simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1983); the end of class and socialism (Gorz, 1982); the emphasis on plurality and difference (Derrida, 1978) – are responses to the decline of the anti-modernization theories of the 1960s."
>
> (Cooper, 1997, p. 25).

Modernist theories, in relation to these postmodern perspectives, have essentially lost their "explanatory power":

> "The first is the belief that there has been a fundamental shift in society such that modernist theories like Marxism have lost their explanatory power."

(Cooper, 1997, p. 16)

And with this shift, concepts of vision, objectivity and knowledge appear to be dismissed too. This position on postmodernism (extreme constructive position) sees reality as mainly a construct of collective cognition, culture, society and, of course, human language or discourse. Taken in relation to accounting as a regulative conceptual system, accounting is a subjective, metaphorical activity, that is unstructured by inputs received from external reality.

The postmodern position appears to heighten the role that textual inscriptions play in the radical transformation of society. Even though the linguistic/postmodern turn is extremely useful of course in terms of identifying unjust or oppressive in the form of Avant-grade French philosophy, postmodernism, according to Cooper, may ignore some of the more significant materialist Marxist considerations, ignoring real material constraints that affect the subject's ability to think or live otherwise.

> "In arguing for a more Marxist, class-based analysis of accounting, this paper does not wish to deny many of the important insights derived from the work of "postmodern philosophers", especially those derived from a Derridian, Foucauldian or Poststructuralist feminist accounting perspective (e.g. Arrington and Francis, 1989; Neimark and Tinker, 1987; Lehman and Tinker, 1987; Miller and O'Leary, 1987, Cooper, 1992; Shearer and Arrington, 1993). The importance of this work, especially from a psychoanalytic viewpoint, the concern with the decentred, alienated subject, the importance of knowledge and the centrality of language, is undeniable".

(Cooper, 1997, p. 20)

Postmodernism, and its tendency to think within the confines of discourse alone, threatens to push financial accounting further away from the *too real* of social injustice. Too real in

fact, that they come from the real material structure of reality: laws, contracts, and regulations, and accounting rules[61].

According to Cooper, certain postmodern thinking too readily abstains from vocabulary that indicates social problems that *really* effect on members society. In other words, the theories become blinder to the material realm of things and objects (and that includes rules), that prevails to maintain social injustice:

> "The modernization focus of capital market-based accounting researchers, with their tenacious belief that there are few problems with our present-day society which cannot be sorted out in time by capitalism, have still not learned to use their imaginations and *conceive of society functioning in a different way*."
>
> (Cooper, 1997, p. 23, *emphasis added*)

Too much attention is given to subjects and their assumed access to transparency through language. That has arguably done little in conceiving "of society functioning in a different way". This leads to the following notion of accounting as a relative, metaphorical language game. Accounting as free floating signs, that disconnect and disengage from effects from the real world derives mainly from an idea that subjects are in control/are sovereign. Language, in this regard, is metaphorical in an overt way - to be easily accessed, replaced without constraint. This is because human theories are free to order and make reality in entirely new ways. However, by presupposing that language shapes worlds, there is also a tendency to leave out the constraining effects that material things can engender: accounting as rule, practice, or law that does not constrain behavior or exercises any influence on cognition. There is the idea that society fails to alter anything here. Especially when an attempt is made to dislodge powerful signifying practices. When tackling problems at the level of language, texts, signifiers, metaphors, and semiotic signs, there is a failure to acknowledge the material conditions that constrain: the world that holds the language of business (accounting) in place, the unconscious. Favoring discourse as foregrounded, transparent and clearly performed by humans, subjectivism in accounting hints at human access done by human beings who have authority over its discursivity.

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[61] Similarly, in a more recent paper, Cooper (2015) sees that the rise of exchange value aspects of financial accounting can possibly lead to financial crises, such as to how to adequately value financial instruments as elements of the contradictory aspects of contemporary capitalism. Cooper sees a Marxist critique as appropriate to recognizing and measuring assets "record the expenses connected with risk reduction derivatives as expenses" (p. 78). The Marxist theory as a highlighting of the real effects of capitalism is crucial in understanding Cooper's paper: "It is not the role of Marxist theory to solve the problems of capitalism, but rather to enable a deeper understanding of it" (Cooper, 2015, p. 79).

In spite of its applicability in tackling accounts that are essentialist and authoritative, the linguistic/postmodern turn may pay too little attention to non-signifying constraints. It may force a view that language is important, ignoring how social context, laws and rules impose on our lives, languages and accounting. Citing Neimark, (1990, p. 109), Cooper, points out,

> ''. . . this emphasis on language comes at the price of not merely ignoring, but being actively hostile to, the broader materialist emphasis of Marx. Thus, their work fails to consider the cruder, but no less significant fields of social combat in the day-to-day experiences of work and survival through inter- and intra-class struggle, patriarchy and imperialism. They fail to appreciate and acknowledge the interpenetration of language and materiality so central to both recent Marxist and feminist perspectives''.

> (Cooper, 1997, pp. 20-21)

Therefore, a focus on language and semiotics presupposes that belief, ideology and discourse derives mainly from the problematic subject(s). The subject is free to choose their language and their cultural influences that generate meaning. This could be called agency/desire/pragmatism/need in thinking accounting as a metaphor that can free from constraints of world: time, technology, infrastructure, politics, experience. Among a plethora of different, contextual/local pressures, accounting remains distant. In this regard, Cooper explains that certain postmodern-isms place too much emphasis on role that languages play in the construction of worlds, so that there is never clarity on which systems are indeed suitable. That only languages, discourses and academic texts hold belief systems in place, is somewhat of a mistaken view.

Viewing accounting as a language focuses perhaps too much on accounting as a site for free play. There is a tendency to think accounting as free from the unconscious. Locating power in all linguistic systems in which the aim is to tackle knowledge as power at the level of signification is a product of the linguistic/postmodern turn[62]. Such attempts to challenge material conditions themselves become side-lined in order to tackle powerful conceptions of

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[62] As Karen Barad (2007, p.132) explains, "Language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretive turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every, "thing"—even materiality—is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation. The ubiquitous puns on "matter" do not, alas, mark a rethinking of the key concepts (materiality and signification) and the relationship between them. Rather, they seem to be symptomatic of the extent to which matters of "fact" (so to speak) have been replaced with matters of signification (no scare quotes here). Language matters. Discourse matters. Culture matters. There is an important sense in which the only thing that doesn't seem to matter anymore is matter." (see also Barad, 2003)

knowledge (and accounting knowledge) by challenging accounting language or discourse labelled as ideological and consequently flawed.

On the contrary, the relationship between language (accounting) and lived conditions may be so thoroughly obvious it is downright transparent. And this is because the world imposes on the human body that has to reason, think and live. Material constraints prevent subject/culture can potentially restrict subjects from thinking any differently (infrastructure, the family unit, weather, climate, the internet, economic limitations, and, accounting rules). These all play a part in literally exhausting the human subject, leaving him/her without time, capital, space or even energy to think or decide out of these social realities; not to think them differently, but only to experience them directly.

The form of critique that reveals accounting as a metaphor may fail to acknowledge other constraining influences that provide checks on lived experience, other than language[63]. The epistemic fixation, which Walters declares with concepts mirroring economic events, may only result in a challenge from critical perspectives. Perspectives that see accounting as metaphorical free play for radically re-fixing, re-altering and re-configuring accounting models. Without constraint from the world that limits such free play: rules, laws, rights, markets, economic conditions etc. that may threaten to lose contact with reality.

If understood correctly, Cooper calls for a moratorium on this type of postmodernist thinking. One that implies free play over the type of schemes we wish and desire, in the absence of an experienced world. If accounting is thought of as a complex system of rules and practices rather than an arbitrary language of signs that functions metaphorically, then researchers should not abandon Marxist thought for the future. If accounting is a language, accounting literature views accounting as an arbitrary, free floating system of signs because this 'postmodern' view assumes that subjects are freely capable and willing to alter financial accounting in line with the simple predilection of the human as a pragmatic agent, without any world affecting constraint.

To develop new ways of thinking about knowledge that transcends the linguistic turns, views of *Vision as Knowledge* might be viewed more in line with the changing and complex set of practices, rules, concepts, and laws that are intrinsically linked with our environments,

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[63] Object oriented ontologies now abound in philosophical debates. Justesen and Mouritsen (2011) clearly lay out how ANT theory operates. ANT is a focus away from subject orientated approaches to object oriented approaches. What has caused such a turn towards objects, materiality and realism is an interesting question. The authors make clear that, "Latour (2005a) is in sharp contrast to such perspectives (subject/object dualistic perspectives) of 'keeping the social flat" is a criticism of such reductionist explanations (completely subjective nor completely objective" (parenthesis added).

society and culture, that basically hold certain world views/beliefs in place. Accounting therefore can be viewed as a transitional form of knowledge under this perspective that is intertwined with the environment; not an arbitrary metaphorical language that shapes itself independently of the environmental and social milieu in which it exists.

The overall view here is that subjects fail to get a good look at what is going on outside of their own experience. They remain trapped within metaphors that go largely unnoticed in accounting discourse. This is because the world causes them to be there, not because subjects will them through a radical control of their very own socially produced realities. These positions may become skeptical over the extent to which accounting knowledge is a visual knowledge: a knowledge of the outside world obtained through taking up a distant, passively empirically by-standing position. This inability to get outside of thought reveals a trap that falls broadly into what Walters (2004) has named a prison house; where the only claim can be that phenomena are imaginary, and that our relationship with the world is structured through discursivity and belief alone.

2.8 GOING BEYOND: BETWEEN THE LITERAL AND METAPHORICAL

There is of course another way to think about metaphor. This approach is then not to see metaphors produced by the wills, predilections and desires of human subjects[64]. This cannot be achieved if knowledge is not reconceived: a new understanding of *Vision as Knowledge* must be thought between these extremes[65] existing within the grey area of the literal versus metaphorical polarity. A view that vision is knowledge is a metaphor that is so deeply submerged within accounting discourse that it tempts us to see it as purely conventional, empty of manifest metaphorical content, and that changes in a nuanced way over time. And because, and this is important to the thesis overall, the world imposes on our

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[64] A vision/blind duality is captured is one where a strong visualization of the corporation is assumed. The sharp distinction between Vision and Blindness is held in a number of academic papers and books in the 2000s (Macintosh et al, 2000, Macintosh, 2006, Macintosh 2009), which elaborates on this epistemological dissolution into blind rule following behavior. The visual, intellectual even, form of knowing of empirical observation fails, so the aim is to show accounting rules instead as a manufacturer of knowledge negatively; where the world is little involved in guiding accounting: "Accounting language is not a transparent medium. But rather is the material used to manufacture accounting 'truths" (Macintosh, 2009, p. 168). With French sociologist and postmodern thinker Jean Baudrillard being put to use in critical financial accounting literature to challenge to tackle taken for granted notions of accounting knowledge (See Preston, Young and Wright, 1996), accounting knowledge seems to be lost to the excesses of information.

[65] And because accounting comes against such a world that is strangely unfamiliar to accounting models (perhaps a "bleak" Baudrillardian vision)[65], Macintosh (2000) argues that accounting theory should break with the mono-logic accounting map metaphor. And instead look at breaking into fragments as it were of different, local perspectives. Different perspectives of travelling the economic landscape. And this would "bring a new final vocabulary into play": "Remedies such as those described in the Prologue seem to be very much palliative attempts to patch up monologic accounting. But a heteroglossic accounting would bring a new final vocabulary into play."(Macintosh, 2000, p.134)

descriptions/schemes, which is a point elucidated further in the following methodological chapters.

The contested approaches toward knowledge formation in accounting is also a crucial step in examining the *Vision as Knowledge* metaphor in financial accounting. And how its meaning, over time, alters. While the critical view holds vision as a less than suitable metaphor for knowledge in accounting, then a question remains. If not absolute vision, something like a Western Idealized of patriarchal God's eye view of something, then what of accounting knowledge? What definition, if any, could be given to accounting knowledge as vision, if not this *one type* of visual knowledge. The answer may be that change comes from emergence, by agents being affected by experiences, by context, that ultimately shift the definition of what visual knowledge means in financial accounting over time. But overt language, overt metaphor, which are typical of the thinking on metaphor, can be subject to discussions regarding power, authority and intention, because they depend on the power of those to use language to deepen or strengthen their position.

2.8.1 A Turn to Objects – Submerged Metaphors

Therefore, what comes out of this is an important consideration of philosophy that orients towards questions of the ontological kind (how an object world affects), not the epistemological (subject knowing world). The real affects cognition, that alters and shapes in accordance with changes and shifts in society. Not the converse in which subject presumes control over language. Thus, change is acknowledged in vision metaphor due to this emergence of materialism. And this is because of changes in the experience of environments endorsing ontological plurality:

> "The outlook is that the world is not one thing that would be susceptible to the old-fashioned empirical detection, but in fact is a far more complex, multidimensional, and multiple entity than usually thought."

> (Viljanen, 2009, p. 8)

The recent turn towards the object (speculative realism) speculates out of the human-thought-world correlate/relation and assumes a speculative, ontological realism (see Bryant, Srnicek and Harman, 2011), who see that "phenomenology, structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, and postmodernism have all been perfect exemplars of the anti-realist trend in continental philosophy" (p. 2). This is where renewed approaches attempt to consider a way out of the subject-object hierarchy that concerns only human

representation at the expense of a shared world. Instead, this approach attempts to flattens the hierarchical relation by which subjects attempt to fit with some external feature, representationally. In other words, these positions assume a certain flatland reciprocity, where objects come to translate each other or fail to translate each other. Where objects come into contact, surprise, but exist independently of relations, they may interact or remain hidden. These objects are varied in nature, including even fiction. These are objects that touch and affect one another, existing outside of human doings. In light of this, the thesis recognizes the general issue that the subject must acknowledge that the world plays a part in the development of the subject's language, meanings and metaphors, on a subconscious (hidden), as well as a conscious (obvious) level.

The object-oriented turn considers thinking beyond subjectivity, and social constructions. Ones that are "aligned with the interests of particular groups" (Atkins, and Robinson, 2013, p. 4). In object oriented studies, Actor Network Theory, Science and Technology Studies (STS), feminist studies, anthropology, and cognitive science, there must be space for the world to affect relations, to come in between, and be a productive force on concepts:

> "Knowledge is sometimes seen as culturally embedded and emergent as the imaginaries that guide practice. More recently ontologies have increasingly come to be seen as emerging from webs of relations that are enacted through the pooled agency of humans and objects."

> (Atkins and Robinson, 2013, p. 4)

2.8.2 ACTOR NETWORK THEORY, ONTOLOGICAL POLITICS AND METAPHOR

The thesis here will not consider all of the accounting studies that employ Actor Network Theory (ANT), Science and Technology studies (STS) or some variant of an ontological or material turn (see Justesen and Mouritsen, 2011, for a good overview of ANT in Accounting). However, a paper by the sociologist John Law and his explanation of Norwegian Salmon Farming paper (See Law and Lien, 2012), is used here in order to briefly clarify the position between the emergence of concepts and reality (see also Latour, 1999,

Mol, 1999, Mol, 2002[66]). And the way meaning is shaped by an emergent relatedness between bodies and the worlds they inhabit.

In short, Law and Lien (2012) focus on how salmon fishing practices enact the concept of the object. Here, the object 'salmon' is performed, enacted or accomplished. Through tacit and explicit knowledge, practice, instruments, material spaces, procedures and learned techniques. Salmon is rather n accomplishment of human practice than representation. Different types of salmon are enacted through the non-representational interactivity of bodies and objects. Salmon is a non-representational or a metaphorical relation of touch, of interaction between humans and objects. It is inherently practical (a know-how), in that the fixing of practice, the continuity of "material bodies of work or styles, ones that have gained enough stability over time, through for example, the establishment of corporeal routines and specialized devices, to reproduce themselves" (Thrift 2007, p.8). The object yields different semantic outcomes, that are dependent on the approach to investigation, for which meaning is productive/performative. For the object Salmon, situated-ness suggests translation. That is, the appearance of the practice and its contested properties, approaches and translations of the object affected by the object all in order to establish it as a singular entity.

Law and Lien (2012) overall show how each farming practice actually enacts, performs or practices different concepts of objects. To reveal the way in which practices translate objects differently, the object salmon can be shown as a construction, an accomplishment, which emerges from relations. It is an accomplishment that depends on how the human subject's practices relate to, rather than accurately represent/reflect the object that is normally presumed prior and independent of relations, of us. Representation implies a human-object correlate where a mirror analysis is presumed; where *the* salmon must be known as a pre-existing entity independently of human practice. Translation implies the intermediation of human practice to produce, and what produces the salmon is the way in which subjects perform the object in multiple ways. This is dependent on the difference subject-object relation in context, what Karen Barad calls "relata" (2007, p.140)[67].

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[66] These studies have in common a view of plural realties. In some sense, these views de-emphasize what science claims to have achieved. The God's eye "trick" (See Haraway, 1989, p. 189-195) whereby observing at a distance without practices, methods and systems by which to obtain knowledge puts the scientist in a privileged positon, over other situated practices. Such studies offer insights into the normative assumptions of neutrality in knowledge practices.

[67] "Relata" are those entities that emerge from social relations. In *Meeting the Universe Halfway* (2007), Barad explains both relations and relata. Barad asserts that that relata are not determinate objects that enter into a relationship with

The political upshot of this is that there are different salmon outcomes. There is not a discrete salmon as a thing independent of its relation. And if outcomes depend on the types of impermanent human practice(s) that produce these different salmon outcomes, then reality is constituted politically (political ontology). This is because of the way it enacts how subjects (humans) relate to objects in and of the world. From this political perspective, this means that decisions have to be reached within a constantly changing landscape, where interaction occurs continuously. In the words of Anne Marie Mol, "if reality is done, if it is historically and materially located, then it is also multiple" (1999, p. 75).

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, the literature is understood to focus on the overt metaphorical, conscious surface of language in its attempts to remain within the symbolic at the expense of the real. This is where subjective free will assumes control over language, which is an outcome of some radical postmodern, poststructuralist, hermeneutic or linguistic turn. In the early debates, three themes were identified: a) accounting is overtly metaphorical b) society makes/constructs reality, and so implies c) subjects have the ability to access, critique and freely exchange the extant order. The literature demonstrates a common view of metaphor that derives from a Cartesian dualism of knower of known in which subjects have the ability to access, change and implement stronger perhaps ethical or normative frameworks. Based on perhaps a hard-wired philosophical assumption about subject-matter separation, this view assumes the malleability of our worlds (Morton 2013), and thus presuppose radical subjectivity to access, depose and re-construct. New, fairer frameworks that would seek to improve accounting practice is presumed.

However, the literature may only tackle the many rhetorical, surface metaphorical instances that arise from such intentional flourishes assuming the deeper body-world separation. This supposition is most basically reflected in Walters (2004). That to forget the metaphoricity of the "proper" (Walters, 2004) is also to forget the submerged metaphors that are an integral part of accounting discourse.

As a contribution, the thesis adopts a different view of metaphor. Metaphor is understood as deeply submerged/backgrounded within language that is not retrieved in accounting debate.

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something else, but are, rather, within things. More crudely, relational thinking such as Barad, emphasize that events arise from a dialogic emergence. Here there is a drawing together, a touching, of subjects and objects, implying something of the between human, shared experience or community.

Metaphor, it is understood, is an integral part of "normal" objective language. Importantly, metaphor derives from the way bodies fundamentally interact with their environments and is a causal rather than mere justificatory feature of language. They do not merely derive from the partial rhetoric of managers, academics or professionals who seek to manipulate discourse to seek their own subjectivities and reinforce a narrative of power: governance speak that uses rhetorical language in the form of spin to convince or otherwise disprove certain modes of thinking.

The review of the literature has revealed how accounting research may lead to think about metaphor differently. Differently in the sense that metaphor is an outcome of the way in which subjects interact with their environments. Metaphor is not merely an outcome of the incongruity of the subjective mind-set of subjects who wish the world *to be* a certain *way*. To make accounting more objective by *fitting* the right metaphors, by gaining more clarity. This idea/aim is to think subjects distant from world – in keeping with the mind-body dualism and its separation, that arguably still influences thought about accounting as language and metaphor. In order to know and then sever from the prevailing scheme breeds the assumption that subjects are in control and that language is an escape route from unfair systems.

The aim might be to think against this and argue that our concepts are determined by our lived reality and experience, with a deeper anchoring in embodiment. That overt assumptions are based on the way certain objects, like accounting, construct and sustain ideas about what accounting would wish to see itself as is argued in favor of a more body-world evolving discourse. How such presumed stable metaphorical concepts evolve in rather subtle, submerged, backgrounded ways, is the theme of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3 - VISION, OBJECTIVITY, AND KNOWLEDGE

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Using Alan Megill's four senses of objectivity (*Rethinking Objectivity*, 1994), it is argued in this chapter that objectivity exists in financial accounting, in spite of many views held within the accounting literature that may suggest accounting is inherently subjective. However, in order to understand accounting objectivity, it is understood that there are different metaphorical *senses* of objectivity. It is recognized that there are broadly four evolving senses of objectivity in financial accounting conceptual framework development: absolute, disciplinary, dialectic, and procedural. However, the senses of objectivity identified within each of the chosen conceptual frameworks for this thesis (FASB 1980, IASB 1989, ASB 1999, IASB 2010 to 2015) have a relationship with absolute objectivity [a disembodied conception of vision (see the end of chapter two above)], at least as an ideal that yields some universal, objective, "normal" functional literal language. The logic of this chapter is to argue for the metaphoricity of such "proper" transparent language that appears distant from non-literal, overt/poetic metaphorical language.

Nietzsche in his *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic* (1887) raises caution over a fiction of a mechanical eye of pure reason, a perspective that has no particular direction (a correspondence theory of objectivity and knowledge[68]). In this respect, objectivity can be judged according to Nietzsche as "there is only a perspective seeing, only a perspective knowing" (Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morality, 1887 p. 12). Objectivity, however, tends to be understood as a scientific or view from nowhere (See Haraway, 1991[69]): a tenuous, yet idealistic form of objectivity. It is recognized that objectivity, as a naïve correspondence theory, is an attempt to mask the authoritative embodied subjective viewpoints that inhere in all significant objective representations. Authorities without a viewpoint aim to remove their dependence on the very human embodied perspective(s) that form the representation. However, accounting appears to be a value independent, positivist objectivity. As Ijiri (1983)

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[68] The correspondence theory of objectivity and knowledge is proximal to a correspondence theory of truth, which asserts that objectivity is possible only with a representation independent reality - with the way the world really is. The aim in correspondence theory is to get one's beliefs over time to better correspond to the way the world really is.

[69] Haraway (1991, p. 189) asserts that there is no privileged viewing position (a symbolic referent, Man, God, Being) and from such a position there is no position: values, attitudes, beliefs are positional or perspectival.

writes, "objectivity means the independence of the information content from the preparer of the information, that is, similar or identical information is produced regardless of who prepares it". However, Porter (1992), cited in Power (1994, p. 9) describes the procedural, administrative and indeed industrious efforts to reach objectivity among accounting preparers, asserting that, "the ambit of accounting...is first of all administrative and not cognitive" (1992, p. 641).

However, certain cognitive views still capture the imagination of the accounting literature. Financial accounting theory takes seriously the idea that accounting representations correspond to the way the world really is, even if the way the world is, is ontologically socially produced (Mouck, 2004, Lee, 2006a).

Similar to Megill (1994), Haraway (1991) thinks it is wrong to consider that there is such a thing as a God's eye view of things (absolute correspondence theory of objectivity), especially one that is independent of all human perspectives, needs, or judgments. On the contrary, Haraway, like Megill, argues that the claim of objectivity is already done from a particular point of view or situated perspective and is already "subjective" by its very nature. Therefore, it is naïve to think there exists such an omniscient viewing position from which we can assess the extent to which our descriptions simply reflect facts. Instead, it is better to conceive of this metaphor as a "god trick of seeing everything from nowhere" (Haraway, 1991, p. 189).

Absolute objectivity, in this sense, ignores the embodied and human relations that have gone into producing this perspective in an attempt to give credence to a reality that exist independently of human representation. Contrary to this, Haraway wants to argue for "situated or embodied knowledges" (Haraway, p. 191) where objectivity would always be judged in terms of what a subject calls her own judgments. Objectivity derives from embodied, "knowing subjects". Instead, perspectives have been overshadowed by the power of a disembodied, mechanical eye of reason:

> "Eyes have been used to...distance the knowing subject from everybody and everything in the interests of unfettered power...visualizing technologies are without apparent limit"
>
> (Haraway, 1991, p. 188)

Accounting is objective not in any metaphysical, correspondence sense of absolute knowledge. It is also argued that accounting is objective in spite of various post-structural

critiques in financial accounting.

To restate, the thesis analyses the content of four conceptual frameworks periods: FASB (from 1978 to 1985), the International Accounting Standards Board's framework (1989), the UK's Accounting Standards Board's Statement of Principles, (1999), The International Accounting Standard Board's framework (2010) and the recent and 2015 Exposure project. At the time of writing, the 2018 Conceptual framework has not yet been published. In this chapter, a taxonomy is used to guide to our reading of the conceptual frameworks. The taxonomy used is Alan Megill's four senses of objectivity, which provides four overlapping senses of objectivity that appear over time. Objectivity may be thought of in accounting as intrinsically scientific (Power, 1991), a way of "preserving institutional practices" (Power, 1991, p. 8) However, for Megill there are broadly four senses of objectivity and these are as follows: absolute, disciplinary, dialectic and procedural, and all of these have some relationship with an absolute form of objectivity.

Megill traces the transition of objectivity from Renaissance thinking to bureaucratic modern institutions. Objectivity traditionally became associated with something like naïve seeing, naïve talking; that spoke of a naïve realism. Traditional objectivity explains the link between the mind (the mental substance) and the essences of objects (external substance). From this, a machine-cognitivist approach to meaning was developed, where the mind maps reality and forms belief through this mapping. However, the problem with this form of objectivity seems to be the impossibility "to take seriously (anyone else's) blithely confident claims to have attained the truth of things", (Megill, p. 108). Objectivity becomes embroiled with the interlocutors' disavowal of one's claims to know the truth. Where choosing this perspective or another "is a hard choice to make – or rather, a hard choice to justify". Megill elucidates this using Geoffrey Eley's reflection on historians and social values where Megill asserts that Eley sees "disobedience and rule-breaking" as appropriate to progress, to free the human spirit from the tyranny of authoritative rule.

Thus, progress results from rule breaking behaviour in order to abolish the commitment to "the normal rules and protocols of evidence and argument" (p. 108). According to Megill, in Foucault's *History of Madness* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* the prevailing objectivity is just the accepted or settled way of doing things. Foucault's method, for example, was to deconstruct the past: "in interviews, and in short essays – that were likewise aimed at radically transforming the present". In this respect, objectivity is to be viewed as an authoritative perspective. One that prevents progress. It is only when subjective (or even

inter-subjective) accounts challenge the status quo, that society can experience a "radical transformation of attitudes and institutional practices in the present" (Megill, 2007, p. 108)

Yet, the "actual content of the notion of objectivity remains elusive. It is often easier to begin by saying what objectivity is not than what it is", (p. 108). As Megill points out, the difficulty with the concept of objectivity was that it aimed to distance the researcher from her object of investigation. Objectivity removes viewpoints that would largely expose one's "political or other commitments". For example, Megill draws on Haskell's review of an essay by Peter Novick entitled *That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question and The American Historical Profession*, first published in 1988. Haskell claims that objectivity has no connection with neutrality since in the course of epistemic discovery researchers may find they possess "strong political commitments". Megill adds to Haskell's sentiment "Detachment from one's own commitments also means detachment from the project of trying to demonstrate the truth of one's theory concerning human society" (p. 109). In other words, objectivity has little to do with neutrality. But does involve how the person making her claims detaches oneself from his or her commitments.

Megill seeks to show that "objectivity is not a single concept, but a number of different concepts that are not entirely reducible to one basic concept" (p.112). That is, he differentiates between much grander absolute conceptions of objectivity (those associated with the philosophy of Descartes' mind-body dualism) where he separates these from the narrower forms (for example, a discipline's epistemic objectivity), to more practical forms that rely on the efficacy of accepted methods and procedural norms. In his explanation of dialectical objectivity, the subjective shows through as it enters into an almost connoisseur-like appreciation of objects in terms of the human becoming a requisite presence. And in the procedural form of objectivity, the aim is "less to attain truth than to avoid error" (p.113).

Specifically, Megill's aim is to expose the break with the traditional concepts of absolute objectivity. He asserts that we, society, need to "re-think objectivity". That is, Megill wants to show a multidisciplinary dimension in what terms "objective" and "objectivity" mean: how they are related, and overlap with one another, but ultimately his view of objectivity is quite clear: "there is no such thing as the objectivity question" (Megill, 1994, p. 1). Megill wants to show instead how objectivity is deeply entangled with the cognitive authority and hence there is a call to explore objectivity's contextual dimensions:

> "Within the general framework of an objectivity-claim as a cognitive authority, it is reasonable and useful to distinguish among four principle senses of objectivity"

(Megill, 2007, p. 113)

For Megill, the notion of objectivity is primarily not a thing in itself. Rather it is used to meet the intended aims that derive from society's expectation of the cognitive authority. That is, taking a position, perspective or viewpoint is indispensable in the formation of objectivity and his view is wary of any talk that promotes a balanced understanding of objectivity. He claims that, "objectivity, then, is not neutrality" (Megill, 2007, p. 109).

While Megill acknowledges that objectivity has a measure of inherent detachment about it, he does not intend to mean that objectivity must pander to fairness. That is, there is no such connection between objectivity and a balanced account. While he makes clear that reporters may make it their duty to give every voice his or her point of view, he also claims that in no way can any "particular account of reality count as objective". In this respect, Megill cites Nietzsche, who asserts that fairness is an "odd conception of objectivity". This is because it does not say anything about the stupidity, agency or "mendacity of various competing views in circulation" (p.110). In other words, the authority has to give an opinion. And this is because "some measure of commitment is necessary if we are to see" (p. 111).

Finally, it is seen that Megill is at a remove from more postmodern claims regarding truth claims. Jean Baudrillard's cynicism regarding truth would be one such example. Baudrillard's is the collapse of social truth because it gets lost in the cacophony of various and competing discourses (See Baudrillard and 3 essays of Gulf War)[70]. Yet the drive for greater procedural objectivity is inspired by a commitment to truth it appears: "such perspectives [angular] perspectives are compatible with commitment to the project of discovering truth..." (p.111). Developing on this, Megill gives us four ways way to conceive of objectivity in spite of a postmodern cynicism about objectivism. Megill does see how truth is compelling in our representations at least inherently Megill does not lose faith in objectivity, however.

And so, one of the more interesting aspects that arises from reading Megill is the connection between objectivity and knowledge. While knowledge was connected with a Renaissance

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[70] Baudrillard declared in a French newspaper, Liberation, March 1991 that the Gulf War did not take place. Baudrillard was not suggesting that that it did not take place, but what actually happened could not be fully understood due to the number of competing discourses in the media variants. Facts and truth get lost in the various windows through which we see the world. In the past, we may have had one or two – newspapers or radios, but more confusing today since the object of representation is distorted due to multiple windows through which to observe the world – social media, TV inter alia.

perspective and the idea of fixed, estranged viewing, objectivity is also connected to such an objectivist perspective. Considering that knowledge is no longer conceptualized as that which, similar to the Renaissance Perspective, is absolute, transcendental neutrality the section is finalized by concluding that the very contingency of objectivity has implications for understanding accounting objectivity, and of course, knowledge. In particular, it is found that implications from the thesis' study might help in understanding accounting objectivity, where it might be argued that objectivity and knowledge in accounting evolves.

3.1 MEGILL: FOUR SENSES OF OBJECTIVITY

Megill, in *Rethinking Objectivity* (pp. 1-20) offers four ways to consider objectivity: absolute, disciplinary, dialectic and procedural. Each of the senses can be related to intentionally excluding (absolute), containing (disciplinary) embracing (dialectic) or removing subjectivity (procedural). Please refer to Table 3.1 below for an overview.

Absolute Objectivity	Disciplinary Objectivity	Dialectical Objectivity	Procedural Objectivity
God's eye View, view from nowhere, aperspectival perspective, Olympian neutrality. Aims to see the object as it really is. Values impersonality. Seeks to exclude subjectivity, except for the objective subjectivity of God.	Disciplinary consensus is the measure of truth. Hostile to originality-beyond-the-paradigm and to off-center viewpoints generally. Values impersonality. Seeks to contain subjectivity: accepts only the (acknowledged) subjectivity of the discipline (subfield, research network, etc.)	Involves the connoisseurship (individual expertise concerning a particular type of object. e.g. Flemish Renaissance paintings). Aims to *interact* with the object and, ideally, to commune with it (and possible also with its creators). Seeks to *harness* subjectivity, making a positive force for the discovery and advance of knowledge.	Values *totally* impersonal procedures (e.g. double-blind experiments) with the intent of avoiding all subjectivities of error. Values avoidances of error as highly as the discovery of truth. Seeks to exclude all subjectivity.

Table 3.1: Adapted from Megill's four senses of objectivity (Megill, 2007, p. 114)

Megill explains that all of these four senses have some relationship with subjectivity and absolute objectivity. In the absolute sense, the aim is to exclude any kind of subjectivity, even though avoiding immanent subjectivity, in the sense of taking an "Olympian perspective", is not possible. These forms obscure the presence of personal judgments in

favour of a metaphor of disembodiment, which may even be likened to masculine authoritarianism (Duran, 1991): God's view or a mechanical, cyclopean, non-human eye of reason, "outside" of any human framework. In the disciplinary sense, the eye is re-attached to a body, giving rise to embodied inter-subjectivity, and hence coherent objectivity. For Megill, subjectivity, having a viewpoint, does not mean there is no objectivity. By achieving a contained subjectivity (inter-subjectivity) there is something similar to absolute objectivity, at least in spirit. This is achieved, somewhat, not by corresponding to social facts, but in some way inventing them through a conversation-based epistemology that produces knowledge of the world we live in.

3.1.1 ABSOLUTE OBJECTIVITY

In the top left quadrant of the table 1 above (absolute objectivity), Megill explains what absolute objectivity is, stating that, "absolutely objective knowledge escapes the constraints of subjectivity and partiality". According to Megill absolute objectivity removes perspective (Nagel, 1986). The contention here is that we should not over-focus on this conception of absolute objectivity because it is quite an impossible telos.

And this is because it is independent of observers. Philosophy, he argues, identifies epistemic criteria for judging the truth or falsity of a statement based on the opinion of authoritative claimants. That is, philosophy is more concerned with "*arriving at criteria for judging claims* to have represented things as they really are" (p.2, *emphasis added)*[71]. Megill explains that we can never reach absolute objectivity. But instead, we at least come close through "universal rational assent". Human beings work together in order to develop rules or criteria, even though those criteria might not give us a representation of how the world really is. "Realists" therefore may think that truth corresponds with the facts of the matter, simply because it is rational to do so, developing criteria that society will *judge* to be objective.

Largely, this idea of a "God's eye view" of reality (Putnam, 1981, p. 49) establishes a hierarchical authority of sovereign viewing subject and a known objective reality: "the absolute sense of objectivity is less a single notion than a set of loosely related notions" (Megill. 1994, p. 2). Specifically, the absolute sense is a loose collective of absent features

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[71] For example, we can have two images of say a solid material table: the table can be explained in terms of color, smell, texture (not uniquely features of the world) to an embodied observer and the other description can be in terms of atoms and alpha and beta particles. The latter, a more desiccated picture, tries to get at the world without idiosyncratic notions of smell/feeling. Texture for example may engender embodied meaning through neural circuits (what a human being feels through the fingertips) as opposed to a strict cognitivist meaning, in which the meaning of the table is simply corresponding to its elements (carbon, hydrogen, phosphorous etc.). Embodied meaning is connected to feelings about the table – one's impressions, experience of the material object, a person's sentiments towards it et al that will depend on the range of human experience.

inherent in other senses of objectivity. First, epistemic criteria are absent. And, second, concerns about that absence engenders a hollow, empty absolute objectivity. Megill explains that there are ontological and epistemological dimensions of absolute objectivity that imply it can be open to deconstruction from the outset. Representations, therefore, are assumed to be faithful to *an* objective reality, even though there is no possibility of representing things "as they really are"; since that would require we can know the world before there are any descriptions of it:

> "One should first of all note the two-fold character of the project of "representing things as they are: ontological (things "as they really are"), and epistemological (since we seek "to represent" these things, and we can go nowhere without that representation"

> (Megill, 1994, p. 2)

In this sense of objectivity, truth is dependent on the representational fit with real things – how the world really is in a pre-structured state. It is purely based on absolute, ineffable conceptions of Truth (capital "T" intended), accuracy, and freedom from human bias. To remain free from a human, or embodied, subjective viewpoint.

Yet, as explained, Megill's conception of absolute objectivity is not entirely of this naïve type associated with a God's eye view of things. These forms are best judged impractical because there is no way subjects can get outside their perspectives and judge the success of their descriptions against a representation independent reality, to get outside of their language. In other words, what transforms accounting into a disciplinary authority is an authority with a viewpoint that is guided by justified beliefs about the world according to the strengths of justification.

3.1.2 DISCIPLINARY OBJECTIVITY

Megill explains that a discipline can achieve absolute objectivity through its own disciplining actions. Through the "proximate convergence of accredited inquirers within a given field (Megill, 1991, p. 305) objectivity can be attained**.** The emphasis shifts here from Megill talking about absolute objectivity, to *ways* of talking about reality, through active engagement with the shared perspectives of peers. Beliefs about the world are captured in the form of coherent, disciplinary language: language is used as a kind of map for getting around in the world. In order to form a descriptive enterprise in terms that an academic

community understands, standards are developed[72]. This mode focuses on seeking and developing a standard way of talking about the world, from where an understandable accounting paradigm emerges in the form of a web of relations that involves conversation between knowledgeable professionals. As Megill explains "disciplinary objectivity emphasizes not universal criteria of judgment but particular, yet still authoritative, disciplinary criteria. It emphasizes not the eventual convergence of all inquirers of good will but the proximate convergence of accredited inquirers within a given field" (2007, p.117). There are two features here of disciplinary objectivity. The first is the practical need for "unacknowledged subjectivity" from anyone who is not inside the field.

Another feature of disciplinary objectivity is "epistemological insecurity" (p.118). The disciplinary authority has realized that it no longer has access to an absolute objectivity via a correspondence theory. In other words, there is no sense in trying to achieve an absolute objectivity where claims correspond to the way the world really is. And so there requires a disciplinary form of objectivity to come in and fill the void. Megill explains this move with reference to the application of Thomas Kuhn's "*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*" published in 1962[73]. Kuhn's book was initially not applicable to the social sciences, but Kuhn's work eventually became "de rigeur in the social sciences". The enormous impact of Kuhn's work on the social sciences engendered a need for structure and order. However, "Kuhn denied the notion of absolute objectivity". It was a result of insecurity in absolute objectivity that helped develop a new sense of disciplinary objectivity; something a group set of professionals could consider good scholarship, and consequently call objective. A point of view that is inherently important to the establishment of disciplinary objectivity.

3.1.3 DIALECTICAL OBJECTIVITY

The third sense of objectivity is the dialectical sense. This type, "involves a positive attitude toward subjectivity" (p. 5), where professionals must bring their own knowledge to the object or event. One central feature of this related sense of objectivity is the subject. The subject is active, rather than passive here. The subject is one who "confers objectivity on impressions" (Megill, 1994 p. 5). In this form, subjectivity is much more confined to observers. It is an

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[72] Bernard Williams explains that the correspondence theory is best judged as a guiding principle at best. In Truth and Truthfulness (2002), Williams rejects the "deniers"; those assumed to be pragmatic and postmodernist in thinking, those who deny the underpinning principle of Truth in terms of providing us with significant human virtues such as sincerity and accuracy.

[73] As mentioned in an earlier footnote, Kuhn's work has had a profound effect on undermining to some degree science's claim of objectivity.

inter-subjectivity that is causally related to a community's established, and perhaps, common sense or nonsensical beliefs. In other words, accounting is guided by other beliefs held about the world as the standard of objectivity. Largely, the dialectic form of objectivity views the correspondence hypothesis as a problem to knowledge production. Megill asserts that objectivity needs subjectivity. It requires the body, and not just the disengaged mind of reason.

As Megill explains "disciplinary objectivity emphasizes not universal criteria of judgment but particular, yet still authoritative, disciplinary criteria. It emphasizes not the eventual convergence of all inquirers of good will but the proximate convergence of accredited inquirers within a given field" (p. 4). Megill explains that disciplinary objectivity refers to "the claims by practitioners of a particular discipline (sub-discipline, research field, etc.) to have authoritative jurisdiction over its area of competence." Therefore, to give an example, society presumes accountants possess the technical skills and technical knowledge to access and articulate the nature of economic facts in the same way, "physicists…are able to get at the truth of the physical universe" (p.118). In other words, accountants provide an understandable framework of "reality" through descriptions that provide a certain amount of approximation to beliefs human beings share about reality[74]. In short, accounting functions as a fuzzy indicator or weak representation, derived from shared beliefs.

3.1.4 PROCEDURAL OBJECTIVITY

> "It [procedural objectivity] can be regarded as an application in a particular direction of dialectical objectivity, one in which a rule-bound mode of action requires the construction of subjects appropriate to it" (Megill, 1991, p. 10, parenthesis added)

Megill asserts that the procedural sense of objectivity is a "modification of absolute objectivity". It is a "modification that focuses solely on the impersonality of procedure, in abstraction from the hoped-for aim of truth" (Megill, 1994, p. 5). Procedural objectivity is a step along from the dialectical: "procedural objectivity can also be seen as an application in a particular direction of dialectical objectivity". Procedural objectivity is closer to the sense of touch than it is to vision. And procedural objectivity may even be likened to blindness in some respects: "Rather, its governing metaphor is tactile, in the negative sense of hands off!"

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[74] Rorty (1979) sees that our beliefs are not determined due to corresponding to facts. In effect, we are not referring, but we use language to deal with reality. It is not that we are out of touch with reality, but the events that go on in reality, society create language to hold beliefs and to share them with others. It is not that accounting creates knowledge, but instead it derives from our embodied experiences in the environment.

Its motto might well be "untouched by human hands". The main distinguishing feature of this objectivity is *laissez-faire*, to leave things as they are. As Megill explains, there are many instances in which true is replaced by procedurally correct. It is where, "interpretation, selectivity, artistry, and judgement itself" are removed with the intention to "limit the exercise of personal judgment" (Megill, 2007, p.123). The procedural rationale is therefore the goal to replace "true" with "procedurally correct". The aim is to establish fair and attainable objectives without the intrusion of judgement. But at the same time to be objectives a community can view as fair and sensible. Individuals follow the procedures, in so far as they believe they are truthful or useful for making practical decisions. For if humans are to follow the patterns of automation, what better way than to follow the procedural algorithms, that underpin this form of objectivity.

This section has briefly discussed the implications of certain different yet related senses of objectivity, especially as they are assumed relevant for the conceptual frameworks studied in the thesis. What is suggested is that there are different yet related senses of objectivity. Significantly, all forms of objectivity take up a point of view – a subjective, embodied element that hinges on a human perspective that is present in all forms of objectivity. For instance, what has been observed in the 2014 IASB user forum is an attempt of regulators to engage with the investment community and so to reduce difference. By appealing more and more to the larger, institutional investing community, for support, accounting frameworks derive their appeal only from the remainder, the institutional users who are out-there and who will approve moves towards, for example, a balance sheet approach (O'Brien, 2009) of fair value accounting where the firm becomes a mirror of the market. This of course contravenes a naïve premise. That there exists a universal subjectivity that all users, mainly those that are notional, constructed and mostly absent users, must follow in attempts to engage with the IASB, to speak their language. In addition, it is observed that the claims made by the IASB recently, replacing reliability with a faithful representation, for example, is but another attempt to converge on world-guided anchor points; that of fair values, prices, and market exchange rates, that are also intrinsically unstable and subject to periodic collapse.

In the next section, the theme of vision, objectivity and knowledge is continued. Where the thesis sees how art may be used in order to make sense of representation as knowledge in accounting. Specifically, its move away from some idealized conception of vision as mind without subjectivity is presumed from Megill's four senses of objectivity to tread a different, yet unseen path.

3.2 DECONSTRUCTING OBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE: THINGS ORDERED BY AND THROUGH ACCOUNTING

In this case of financial accounting, the basic idea involves the pulling together of investing, viewing subjects and viewed upon objects. The medium of accounting reports supports this relation. Corporations are assigned a visual space, as out-there and ontologically separate from accounting representations. But it may be wrong to assume that the same of sort of vision metaphors appear in the conceptual framework(s) over time, especially ones that support an absolute conception of objectivity, one that treats knowledge as a disembodied concept derived from formal operations stored in the mind. It is presumed, in accordance with Megill's four senses of objectivity, that there is evolution in the context of accounting knowledge. That there is evolution in the subconscious: an evolution in vision from Descartes' model of the mind to something other.

What the conceptual framework tries to do is to achieve a sense of order - a sort of visual order in the beginning. And this starts with the Financial Accounting Standards Board, in 1978. In effect, the accounting report performs a relationship between empirical objects/events/transactions, and through an ordering of material elements and their consequent semiotics effects, producing spaces for viewers and viewed on either side of an accounting representation. How financial reports appear to achieve such order has changed over time, it is argued. And the one thing that has changed is how we think about knowledge, objectivity and representation in terms of cognition and the intellect, of the mind.

It can be thought that the things are ordered by and through financial reports. That there should not be disorder. And that accounting reports order information through technical rules in such a controlled and procedural manner. Accounting, it is argued, is visual in that the user looks at objects/events/phenomena through the transparency of accounting rules in order to see these objects in a certain way in order to make financial decisions.

This section concerns the complex relationship within which subjects (users) and objects (real world) are assembled by the rules of accounting, and what implications this has more generally. This is the logic of this section. And this section tells the story of vision and its role in the constitution of the subject as a *point of view that is constructed by the rules of the representation,* as different ways of gaining knowledge. The subject seeks to know through rules similar to the artistry of the Renaissance. It is the idea that financial reporting acts as a

for the constitution of the subject in this way, for Mouck (2004), whereupon the subject as a distanced point of view, constructed by the very rules of financial accounting.

In this regard, financial reporting is all about representation. It is about transparent, clear seeing, about a user looking at objects through the figurative windowpane of the financial report. Being able to interpret effectively what goes on within an organization, users are assisted by accounting rules in order make economic decisions.

Such a financial reporting regime is an outcome of neo-classical theoretical constructs of subjectivity, which creates a "specific and quite limited image of the financial statement user – a rational economic decision maker (Young, 2006, p. 596). The history of the conceptual framework, it is argued, moves through a number of epistemological stages over this period, from Vision as a Cartesian Perspective (see next section 3.2.1), where a new type of seeing, a new type of subjectivity, emerges. The emergence of a new kind of space that financial reporting seeks to represent.

The main point is that the conceptual framework is governed substantively by a correspondence notion that carries a Cartesian subjectivity. Such a subjectivity establishes a taken for granted relation between viewing subject and viewed object: that of distance, time and space. In the accounting literature, it is argued that accounting rules generate a similar representation (Mouck, 2004) that constructs what Law and Benschop (1997) observes as, a performed point of view, a form of subjectivity that is disembodied, wherein the inner mind mirrors a completely structured world of things. This is by the arrangements of objects in relation to a viewing subject that, effectively, disappears from sight.

It is here the thesis wants to point out here in this case that vision for accounting may not be the type of vision that is discovered in this thesis, that there are many variations in this relationship. What is possible to convey is that the financial report creates a space that assembles subjects (users) and objects (economic events) where a specific order is created where what is considered to be the norm is where subjects (users) view objects/events and make economic decisions at a distance (Robson, 1992). As an exception, it is important to see accounting regulation (conceptual framework) as a space whose epistemology will alter in relation to the effects produced by changes in the cultural contexts (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999, See methodology chapter 5). The constitution of the subject can be seen through a conception of vision within conceptual frameworks, which demonstrates how representation creates the subject-object relationship, where different representations constitutes subjectivity differently.

It is demonstrated that the more the eye *assumes* it sees it all, sees the whole picture, the less the eye actually sees (Hetherington, 1998). The more absolute vision is presumed, the inactivity of the eye of the inner eye of the mind, the more accounting subscribes to the Cartesian inside/outside boundary perspective of accounting rules and the more blindness there shall be[75].

In the next section, it is shown how a Cartesian vision of a disembodied all-knowing eye, and a Euclidean space based on the re-presentation of objects, deconstructs. That what the thesis postulates is the moving from the disembodied sort of vision of the mind as a metaphor for the eye, to the body, where the eye is constructed as the body; that is from vision *as* mind to vision *as* body. In the next section, the a-perspective vision of the Renaissance is used as a metaphor for the discussion. This type of vision, it is argued, is one that would serve as the model for creating division, between viewing subject and viewed upon objects. A division deemed important for constructing an objective viewpoint.

3.2.1 THE RENAISSANCE EYE: CONSTRUCTING THE OBJECTIVE VIEWER

It could be said that the history of conceptual frameworks is a history of faithful representation. The starting point here is the Renaissance Perspective and its invention of linear perspective (Law and Benschop, 1997), and what can be shown is that a relationship between an all-knowing viewing subject and the world as object emerges. Where an accurate representation of the world as object is constituted in and through accounting rules (see Crosby, 1997), the perspectival space is a kind of accomplished space. Linear perspective is a,

> "Mathematical abstraction that simplifies perceived space and represents it without all the actual distortions. It performs a certain kind of ordering that allows things to be seen clearly as if they were a representation of three-dimensional reality as seen with the eye…Above all, linear perspective interpellates the viewer as subject through a relation with the picture while leaving the actual embodied experience of viewing outside and apart. The viewing subject becomes a disembodied monocular eye which a geometrical relationship with the picture-object is established"

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[75] There is, however, a benefit to be had, an opening for a more embodied form of vision, that can possibly be revealed that moves towards touch" "the blind do not see, but have the capacity of touch" (Hetherington, 1999, p. 54). "Touch is halting and cautious, pauses as it goes on its way and opens up embodied forms of knowledge and perception" (Hetherington, 1999, p, 54)

(Hetherington, 1999, p. 54).

Invented by Leon Battista Alberti, who published a treatise on painting (*Della Pitture*) in 1435, linear perspective creates a picture that allows the viewer to see the important details of reality. Here, reality is re-presented and experienced in three dimensions on the two-dimensional space of the canvas. Linear perspective was invented during a time where space became knowable through Euclid's geometry. That is, linear perspective relied on the mathematical order where the viewer is located outside. Here, the subject becomes merely disembodied by focusing on light, and how that light is offered to the rational mind or mental substance, Descartes' *res cogitans*. The rules of this art establish a relation between subject and object through division. Where the subject looks through an imagined windowpane, through which an object is observed. A transparent knowledge of object occurs since there is vision accomplished. This, as Hetherington writes, "had implications not only for painting and how people saw but also their understanding of humans as subjects" (Hetherington 1999, p. 55).

Law and Benshop gives an example of this kind of dualist rationality. The authors use Paolo Uccello's, *The Battle of San Romano* (c.1435 to c.1455; National Gallery, London) (p. 159) in order to show the effects of this painting in constituting subjectivity, where "linear perspective interpellates the viewer as subject though a relation with the picture while leaving the actual embodied experience of viewing outside and apart" (Hetherington, 1999, p. 54). The authors explain,

> "An art-historical account of this kind of painting tells that it illustrates a narrative, —in this instance a battle in which the Florentines beat their opponents. This painting shows an event that has occurred in the real world. Painter, viewer and object have been organized around and through this painting in the manner of the new perspectivalism of the Italian Renaissance."
>
> (Law and Benschop, 1997, p. 159)

As Law and Benschop explain, the importance of this art is the way in which it constructs subjectivity and objectivity: "geometrical ontologies have been naturalized in many contexts to the point where the (narrative) ways in which they constitute subject, object and spatiality are difficult to resist" (p. 161) where the subject constructed outside of the picture "nowhere in the point of infinity" (Hetherington, 1999, p. 56), has become the,

"Hegemonic framing assumptions for much depiction in the West through to the nineteenth century"

(Law and Benschop, 1997, p. 154).

Law and Benschop explain that a faithful representation becomes an imagined window pane through which the subject looks, where that subject is constructed as a disembodied, mechanical eye of reason that is outside, and views from a privileged position (Hetherington, 1999). Objects appear to be ordered for those viewing subjects, resulting in a faithful representation for *that* subject. Where the object world is viewed through an imagined windowpane, the world appears separate from the subject:

> "A faithful representation of the world understands the point of view of the observer as an eye that looks through an imagined windowpane onto the world. The canvas becomes the imagined windowpane. The world that is transformed to fit onto the canvas/windowpane is a Euclidean volume. The objects making up the world may be viewed through that **window** in accordance with a set of geometrical rules. Representation is a matter of projection from the observer's eye of the geometrically determined three dimensions of the world onto the two-dimensional surface of the windowpane."

(Law and Benschop, 1997, p. 159)

The projections of objects on the image removes the subject, pushes the subject away from objects, but constructs them as viewer who can look in, and observe[76]. Like a subject who observes collectibles or valued possessions, the viewer's subjectivity is created by those objects (Hetherington, 1999). Law and Benschop (1997) state that this is how contemporary Westerners have been "constituted" as "Euclidean subjects", how they are constructed by the rules of representation as stereotype of the ideal viewer,

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[76] An important implication from studying vision is to recognize the implicit metaphorical underpinnings of sight: a privileged subject viewing an object voyeuristically from a fixed distance. That is, the metaphor of "a certain prescribed position before the object, from which fixed aristocratic perspective…had earlier been trained to see: its allure, its formal structure, its iconographic program, its resonance with similar cultural artifacts" (Holly, 1996, p. 69)

"For certain purposes, they have performed themselves through, and into, us. Contemporary Westerners have, to a large extent, been constituted as Euclidean subjects at least when they think about representation."

(Law and Benschop, 1997p. 159)

Where the viewer/subject is conceived as a point distinct from the material objects it views, a barrier is created between what its space and the material world. It could be stated that when viewers look at objects, they are being instructed to see that there are "blocky" (Law and Benschop, 1997, p.159) tangible, objects that are to be represented clearly by the subject. The eye is the organ for gaining knowledge of the world, where a link is established between the internal mind and external physical reality. In order for this to happen, the objects that linear perspective creates is for a disembodied eye; one is "able to look in on it [material world] from this privileged position of infinity" (Hetherington, 1999). The world is given "volume"[77] by these rules. Rules that make them appear for a subject without body:

"Together with that construction, a series of transformations is made of the three - dimensional which allow a geometrically appropriate conversion of a perspective on a volume into a surface."

(Law and Benschop, 1997, p. 159)

Hetherington explains that the viewer and viewed relationship is to do with "…the relationship between subject and object in linear perspective is a Euclidean one that allows for nothing but connection and correspondence" (Hetherington, 1998, p. 167). Thus, the rules of the artwork create a space for a form of subjectivity assumed infinite, disembodied, transcendent, God-like.   There exists a separation between those who look at things, and those objects to be looked upon: "On the one hand there is a world, on the other, an observer" (Law and Benschop, 1997, p. 159). Renaissance art, which places the event outside the imagined windowpane, "allows the subject rather than God, the privileged role of being able to give that 'heterogeneity' a sense of order" (Hetherington, 1999, p. 57).

Law and Benschop demonstrates specifically how representation[78] "creates a space for the

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[77] [77] According to Martin Jay, that the Euclidean subject became a metaphor for the capitalist demand for exchange values. "Separate from the painter and the viewer, the visual field depicted on the other side of the canvas could become a portable commodity able to circulation of capital exchange." (Jay, 1988 p.9).

[78] This work of art's eye is more cold and dispassionate: "An abstract coldness of the perspectival gaze meant the withdrawal of the painter's emotional entanglement with the objects depicted in the geometrical space", (Jay, 1988, p. 8). See also Jay (1996).

subject to come into being" (Hetherington, 1999, p. 57). The subject, as Hetherington writes, is "objectified", allowing the "subject, rather than God, the privileged role of being able to give that 'heterogeneity' a sense of order, just like zero does to the numbers one to nine" (Heteherington, p. 57). For Law and Benschop, there are quite clear examples of how the subject is constructed in this particular way:

> "The view here is the that the user/viewing subject is a construct and can be understood in terms of these propositions
>
> 1) Is a point constituted by the rules of perspective.
> 2) Is a point at which matters are drawn together. A series of transformation rules render matters coherent at that point.
> 3) Is a point that is not included in the world that is observes. Subject and Object are separate
> 4) Has only a single perspective on the world. She does not see everything at once, although inexhaustible other partial perspectives are possible
> 5) Is to some extent in a relationship of control with the world. Within the logic of Narrative Euclideanism the flat surface of the canvas is converted into a potential experimental site. Depictions could be re-arranged to re-present other thereby generated volumetric worlds.
>
> It may, in turn, be said of the world that it:
>
> Is separate from the observer.
>
> Is a volume containing objects, which is three-dimensional and Euclidean in character:
>
> Exists prior to depiction, awaiting discovery
>
> Contains objects, which have continuities. They pass through time revealing substantial geometrical stability – or differences – explicable in terms of object-interactions, collisions, etc.
>
> Has a need for narrative, for stories that illuminate the character and displacement of objects in the world.
>
> Finally, it may be said of the representation that it is:

Illustrative because the world and its narratives are separate from the depiction. They pre-exist their depiction. The stories as it were out there, in reality.

Limited, finite. It is a revealed perspective on the world. As we've already noted, other perspectives are possible. This means that the world is inexhaustible with respect to representation. Other constructions are also possible.

(Law and Benschop, 1997, p. 160-161)

Overall, the Renaissance gaze is a world of mirrors and similitudes, of copies and order. The world is conceived of as something to be ordered by the painting, as within the grasp of the subject, where a "diverse array of things is brought together rather than separated and distinct" (Hetherington, 1999, p. 58). That is, the distinctness of things or their heterogeneity is brought together under the concept of value through a correspondence to those exchange/market values, where things are ordered by and through accounting. In this sense, everything as Samuel Edgerton has suggested is similar to the idea of geometric copying where everything can be bought and therefore, sold.

In this sense, Florentine businessmen, invented double entry accounting in order to provide a transparent vision of *their* world, so that they could fully examine a, "visual order that would accord with the tidy principles of mathematical order that they applied to their bank ledger" (See Edgerton, 1976 p. 39). Jay (1993) also complements this idea by explaining on a network of relations, where painting made an economic value out of things because of the arrangements/assemblage of things and their terms of value:

"The placement of objects in a relational field, objects with no intrinsic value of their own outside of those relations, may be said to have paralleled the fungibility of exchange value under capitalism."

(Jay, 1993, p.59)

The gaze itself connects strongly with the idea of accounting as a classificatory system for heterogeneneity under the heading of value as normal, sensible and literal. The perspectival metaphor privileges a form of representational knowledge in the form of a fetish of value, "dependent on visual distance" of subject and object. As Jay puts it, quoting Bergson,

"He [Bergson] repudiated the classical – and also high modernist – fetish of form, which was so dependent on visual distance"

(Jay, 1993, p. 228)

Similar to the way subject is constructed as a vanishing point, the subject is constructed in such a way as to assume a hierarchical position in relation to objects. This positon is connected to what Jay explains as the: "abstract coldness of the perspectival gaze" which "meant the withdrawal of the painter's emotional entanglement with the objects depicted in the geometrical space" (Jay, 1988, p. 8). This becomes a way of seeing that is "entirely natural", since "there is a correspondence between all things and between subjects and objects" (Hetherington, 1999, p. 60). Subjects see this as normative, as the way it should be, in a position above that of objects, the 'other'. The position suggests a strong sense of sovereignty: "The Prince occupies the omnipotent point of infinity", which is "simply the picture plane through which this is projected back from the world of things." (Hetherington, 1999, p. 60).

3.2.2 NORTHERN ART – THE LANDSCAPE

Heterogeneity is understood as the difference between subject and object, viewer and viewed (Law and Benschop, 1997, Hetherington, 1998, 1999). This relationship leaves a distinct impression that the subject must be different from, indeed away from, those objects it gazes upon. In this section, it is explained how Northern Landscape art challenged the Renaissance perspective of Southern Europe (Alpers, 1983, Law and Benschop, 1997). And which is considered a useful way to explain the conception of vision that challenged the perspectival gaze of the mind. Landscape painting of Northern Europe "might never have developed without the perspective theories of the Italian Renaissance" (Gombrich, 1978, p.107). Also, as Svetlana Alpers' opposition to Renaissance art shows, there was a *need*, a desire even, to favor a non-geometrical description and focus on the optical/observation[79].

"Alpers' distinguishes Dutch painting from Narrative Euclideanism by claiming that

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[79] One that would allow the subject to focus on surface appearances over deep structures. Thus, Jay sees Alpers' position as having as its philosophical correlate in Baconian empiricism. Because, as he states, "It casts its attentive eye on the fragmentary, detailed, and richly articulated surface of a world it is content to describe rather than explain" (Jay, 1993, p.120)

in the latter '[t]he world stain[s] the surface with color and light,, impressing itself upon it;; the viewer neither located nor characterized' (Alpers, 1989::227). In the unlocated and uncharacterized viewer we recognize Haraway's God trick[80]. But perhaps not quite.. The painting becomes '[a] surface on which is laid out an assemblage of the world (Alpers, 1989:11-22)."

(Law and Benschop, 1997, p. 164)

It is recognized herein that conceptual frameworks, representing also some kind of challenge to the Perspectivalism, has similarities with that of the Northern artistic movement. That they do seem to normalize the idea of a common landscape (economic landscape) in the constitution of divisive subject and object assemblages.

This is first established by the way the Renaissance perspective "is". As Hetherington (1999) points out, "If the classical age can be said to be about anything it is, as Foucault has shown, about the move away from ways of knowing through similitude to ways of knowing through mathematics and representation", where, "representation as a way of knowing, as form of gaze, comes to be constituted through the separation of the subject from the world and the development of an idea of material heterogeneity as something Other to the subject" (p. 60).

With painters such as Vermeer, in the *View of Delft*, (ca.1660-1661), see (Law and Benschop, 1997), the subject becomes completely separate from viewed objects but also constituted with those objects. For Law and Benschop (1997),

"The picture [Landscape painting] is neither a window on the world nor a story illustrating a separate reality. It is an unbound fragment of a world that continues beyond the canvas' (Alpers, 1989: 27). In Alpers' terms, it is 'optical' in character rather than 'geometrical', because the eye moves around, discovers textures and surfaces, and translates them onto the canvas."

(Law and Benschop, 1997, p. 164, parenthesis added)

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[80] See also Haraway (1989) *Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the Modern World of Science (pp. 189-195)*

In other words, the artwork constructs the user through its information, but in a different way. Svetlana Alpers' opposition to Renaissance art shows, there was a *need*, a desire even, to favor a non-geometrical description, and to focus more on the optical[81] where the viewer's vision is neither "located nor characterized".

> "Alpers' distinguishes Dutch painting from Narrative Euclideanism by claiming that in the latter '[t]he world stain[s] the surface with color and light, impressing itself upon it; the viewer neither located nor characterized' (Alpers, 1989::227). In the unlocated and uncharacterized viewer we recognize Haraway's God trick[82]. But perhaps not quite. The painting becomes '[a] surface on which is laid out an assemblage of the world (Alpers, 1989:11-22)."

> (Law and Benschop, 1997, p. 164)

Thus, viewers now see objects from an independently safe standpoint, which allows the eye to move around, to be more active, independent. So that, "in the paintings of the Dutch artists of the seventeenth century, the subject ceases to be seen as objectivised reflection of what views but becomes a subject separate from the world who sees it from outside in an independent way and not from a geometrically established point" (Hetherington, 1997, p. 167). Crary for example sees this as the entry of the embodied eye that, "generates a spectrum of another color":

> "The human body, in all its contingency and specificity, generates a 'spectrum of another color', and thus becomes the active producer of optical experience."

> (Crary, 1991, p. 69)

Whereas Southern Renaissance art required a disembodied approach to knowledge formation, a stance that assumes "a world indifferent to the beholder's position in front of it" (Jay, 1993, p. 120), objects now have "attributes that may be detected by a moving eye, that changes it regard. An eye that sees as it travels", (Law and Benschop, 1997, p.164). As the

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[81] One that would allow the subject to focus on surface appearances over deep structures. Thus, Jay sees Alpers' position as having as its philosophical correlate in Baconian empiricism. Because, as he states, "It casts its attentive eye on the fragmentary, detailed, and richly articulated surface of a world it is content to describe rather than explain" (Jay, 1993, p.120)
[82] See also Haraway (1991) Simians, Cyborgs and Women.

body travels, as if traversing the features of the world, the human eye and body had to enact the world as it discovered it in a new way.

For Alpers, Dutch art constituted subjects and objects differently. It was a "flat working surface, unframed, on which the world is inscribed" (Alpers, 1989, p. 70). Alpers therefore asserts that Dutch paintings[83] were very different from Alberti's window in Renaissance art because: "the viewer's position or positions are included, influencing that is, the territory he has surveyed" (Alpers, 1989, p. 70-71). As Hetherington describes, "Rather than being defined as a subject through a correspondence with the heterogeneity of the world in all its infinity, now the subject becomes irrevocably separate from the object and the array of objects come to be seen as heterogeneous and apart and in need of classification" According to Hetherington, the vanishing point of Renaissance Perspective disappears. That is, there is no fixed viewing position, no fixed eye of reason. The assumption of the viewer, the subject, has altered.

This appears also from the results in the conceptual framing of accounting rules. Where, for instance, accounting rules allow a more natural sense of order in the construction of subjects, where users from other perspectives are able to see the heterogeneity in a more ordered and classified system of accounting. In a sense, the sense of order and organization, as Hetherington notes, is used so that "the total order of the world might be revealed" (1999, p. 63). The aim of the conceptual framework's language reveals initially a sense of order and representation, a way of looking at the world that is stable, present and unchanging. This sense of order has allowed a certain type of subjectivity to form (one based on the relation between the eye and mind); one that is taken for granted. But one that cannot be automatically assumed over time. In the next section, the flight from modernity to postmodernity is discussed.

3.2.3 FROM MODERNITY TO POSTMODERNITY

If the modern project was an exercise in ordering, "to order the world and make it knowable" for a subject, this only makes sense if the subject is constituted as a "detached subject"

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[83] Thus, Northern Art revealed the human subject-object (world) relationship as: "The modern subject interpellated by being incorporated into the field of vision as a creative force" (Hetherington, 2007, p, 20). It was a, "Regime of curiosity was that of the dream world of subject constitution through object possession in all its bewildering and abundant opportunity" (Hetherington, 1998 p. 21).

(Hetherington. 1999, p. 65). That is, the subject should be distant from action, taking a "panoptic" view of what he observed.

Vision here is what separation is. Law and Benschop's (1997) idea of this is that the separation between the subject and object is, also, a political move, to be above the object, to observe what it views. Vision is subtle, revealing the transition away from such a position of learned observation. To be a subject in accounting implies separation, with the idea of a rational, centered subject at the core, where the idea of an orderly, inert object world at its disposal is formulated.

> "To perform an act of comparison, one has to be able to see and to see one has to be detached from what one sees. In other words, one must have a relationship to what one sees that is not performed by the homology of direct geometrical relationship. Rather there has to be topological complexity that allows the eye to be not only detached from the space of the constituent objects that it views, but also to be able to move freely over the range of objects that it sees and to be able to discriminate between them. For Foucault, this means that the world comes to be perceived as if it is laid out on a two-dimensional table, a principle that lay behind the cabinet of curiosities, so that comparisons could be made through the vision of the detached eye that hovered above the objects on display. The table/cabinet of curiosities comes to represent order, the array of normal objects as heteroclites on display in the museum. What started out as secret cyphers that are connected through similitude, became in their totality as a classificatory mode of ordering a cipher for the idea of order itself."

> (Hetherington, 1999, p 64-65)

Thus, the modern subject is one that seeks to control the world external to it. But, in controlling, modern subjects must also control the, "passions within themselves" (Hetherington, 1999, p. 65). In linear perspective, the idea of subject, locating an ordered object, is according to Law and Benschop, detached from what it sees but constructed in relation to another object.

Yet fast forward a few hundred years to say the postmodernism of a hyperrealism of say a Richard Estes[84] (See Foster, 1996, p. 142), this subject/object relation can be altered

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[84] See Estes' *Union Square* (1985) or *Double self-portrait* (1976)

radically. From a subject in control, to a subject in the throes of anxiety:

> "In these paintings, Estes transports his historical models to a commercial strip and a storefront in New York; and indeed, as with pop, is it is difficult to imagines superrealism apart from the tangled lines and lurid surfaces of capitalist spectacle…with the commodity feminized and the feminine commodity in a way that, even more than pop, superrealism celebrates rather than question. As reproduced in this art, these lines and surfaces often distend, fold back and so flatten pictorial depth."

> (Foster, 1996, p. 141)[85]

The idea of a superrealism is about anxiety in the subjectivity of that presupposed order. Hal Fosters explanation for the super-realist art represents the breakdown of the constructed subject's eye, as information begins to bend and distort the subject position's eye until it no longer can be presumed disengaged, disembodied and centered in relation to the representation. This type of anxiety associated with the subjective is a metaphor for this anxiety. What the subject *does* is frantically attempts to grapple with, to discipline, what goes on all around.

> "I will venture a further analogy in relation to super-realist art: sometimes its illusionism is so excessive as to appear anxious – anxious to cover up this *trou*matic real – but this anxiety cannot help but indicate this real as well"

> (Foster, 1996, p.138).

In this way, Foster describes a reversal of the subject; the object separation in the classical vision of the Renaissance. Importantly, it is now the object that assumes control. Rather, the object, becomes a threat to the subject, that has to internalize, to cope, to struggle, so as to neutralize its threat:

> "The structuring of the visual is strained to the point of implosion, of collapse into the viewer. In front of the paintings one may feel under the gaze, looked at from

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[85] Foster's book, *The Return of the Real* (1996) traces historical works of art, focussing on artists such as Andy Warhol, Richard Estes, Duane Hansen, Mike Kelley, and Cindy Sherman. Foster considers the real as a thing of trauma, through the Pop art of Warhol, the superrealism of Estes, and the abject art of Sherman.

many sides. This is reflected in the super-real images of Richard Estes' painting, where the viewer is caught up; *it is the mirrors that bend and reflect the subject.*"

(Foster, 1996, p. 142, *emphasis added*)

For Foster, the self is lost in the reflective surfaces to the point where the object itself has lost any real significance. But what is significant is the way subjects recognize otherness as an aesthetic object, for its own appreciation of the way it appears, in the same way a consumer appreciates the beauty in the appearance of what s/he buys: "the seduction of shop windows, the luscious sheen of sports cars" (p. 142). Here, the lack of significance is a disciplining sort of political move, constructing the eye through the constructing of images.

"Superrealism is also involved in with this real that lies below, but as a *super*realism it is concerned it concerned to stay on top of it, to keep it down."

(Foster, 1996, p. 144)[86]

The subject cannot make sense of objects "in themselves", seeking to eliminate through educating the subject, to take care of its complexity and to appreciate that complexity as ineffable, requiring something out-with accurate discursive, literal description.

Foster describes how this works in super-realist/hyper-realist works of art where the super-realist painting fails to protect the viewer, but rather, reminds the viewer of that reality. He argues that this is strange reality that with its focuses on screening the real, "to screen the real understood as traumatic (Foster, 1996, p. 132). In this case, the real becomes excessive, not just light received from the object world, but the light that refracts and reflects back onto the subject, "which converges *on* us more than it extends *from* us" (p. 142). This type of "pictorial reflexivity" (p. 142) demonstrates the importance of the senses (to emotion) in acceptance of the representation by the learned few, and in so achieving this, the representation has value not because it reflects an external pre-existing reality, but because it appeals to the *senses* (emotional appeal) of viewers, who accept the representation as an aesthete.

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[86] See Foster (1996) Warhol's *Death in America Series October LXXV, p. 42*

Therefore, it is read that the challenges of the object world could be captured by such an aesthetic gaze. This is not too dissimilar to a disinterested eye, but functions somewhat differently. Hetherington (1999), calls this modernist gaze a Kantian Gaze. This, similar to the reversal of the object gaze, reveals the arrival of an aesthetic subject, one that is more concerned with the subjective reactions to objects than objects in themselves.

> "The object before our eyes is of no real interest to Kant, what is of interest is a person's reaction to that object and their ability to make claims about the beauty of that object that can be taken as universal and communicated to an aesthetic community.
>
> (Hetherington, 1999. p. 66)

Thus, the gaze is in the order of the learned/the connoisseur:

> "In the gaze of the connoisseur, a prisoner in the panopticism of a modern sense of beauty, the sense impressions generated by an object are chaotic and heterogeneous but their heterogeneity is ordered within the mind of the subject by categories of beauty and taste.
>
> (Hetherington, 1999, p. 67).

The disciplining effect of the object makes the subject, which "creates a disciplinary effect of internal reflection". Like the sense impressions that are required in order to appreciate the finesse of a fine wine or the richness of a poetic stanza or couplet, the idea of viewing concerns aesthetic appreciation. That is, as Gere nicely puts is,

> "The Kantian connoisseur can train the public to look at the beautiful and noble objects in a proper and disinterested manner and thus to be constituted as an appreciative aesthetic community"
>
> (Gere, 2012, p. 83)

The aesthetic gaze provides an example of the apparent objectivity of a community that stops short of being understandable to all except those learned individuals. It seems the case that the viewer is no longer understood as a modern subject, constituted merely by the rules of the representation.

As a consequence, the object, our world, evolves, and so too does embodiment, where senses are utilized. Maybe how accounting is to be thought is in a renewed way, which appreciates the deconstruction of the subject's eye as mind: how accounting is able to locate the viewer's vision as a distracted and more embodied eye that ties to the body.

3.3 CONCLUSION – THINGS ORDERED BY AND THROUGH ACCOUNTING

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to theorize the changes in vision metaphor in accounting regulation in relation to theories of the eye/art. What is looked at is the examples of other visual types. Located in different examples/times of epistemological change, vision helps us consider the relationships between viewing subject and viewed upon objects. Not merely through aesthetic appreciation, but as a political act of construction.

In considering this, this chapter derives the following conclusion. That there are epistemological stages in conceptual frameworks. The first type is subject, that, setting up of similitude/analogy accounting as a map, a mirror or accountants as journalists or cartographers. This is tied strongly to the episteme of comparison, perhaps in the realm of "a belief in the supernatural, a sense of history where and the constitution of an evaluative gaze" (Hetherington, 1999, p. 58).

In the second, there is the Dutch move to cabinets of curiosity, as Hetherington puts it. In this sense of art, the world is assumed laid out on a table, ordered and universalized, which becomes separate from the viewer. In this moment, memory is instilled, order is created, and subjectivity developed. However, in stark contrast, the world of the other, as exemplified by the postmodern super-realism of Foster's screen, the world is blocked out, "tamed", in order to be appreciated, by the senses of the viewer that values the effects the representation engenders. Related to the embodied senses, not because the representation provides an accurate value free description of reality.

The starting point was getting a good eye on things, reflecting and gazing to obtain knowledge and to instill an absolute conception of objectivity. The eye shifts, which evidences that there has been a shift from a fixed viewing position that places emphasis on the mind, to one, where, a good representation or expression becomes more difficult, and a stronger disciplinary order takes place. Yet there are difficulties, it appears.

From making accounting with the rules of double entry accrual bookkeeping, knowledge in accounting is less of a fixed eye of the mind; one that sees the most important aspects.

Essentially, the eye has to move, has to be part and linked to a body. The body is required to take in a scene, as shown in Northern Art. This occurs until the eye eventually is overwhelmed by the many refractions – the "lurid surfaces of capitalist spectacle" (Foster, 1996, p. 142). The eye moves away from ideals of accurate representation; this idea of fixed gaze onto a clear corporate entity, to one where the eye is overloaded with many mixed information that generates insecurity in the subject. The thesis, in this regard, provides a new methodological approach for studying knowledge. Tracking change, and assessing the changing meaning of conceptual frameworks and their conceptions of visual knowledge, knowledge is no longer associated with the conception of Renaissance Perspective; one that relies on the isomorphism between account and world.

In order to give an account of this vision metaphor, for knowledge and objectivity, and possibly to better and further understand conceptual frameworks[87], the next chapter, and the subsequent chapters, will explore the nuances of vision as a metaphor for knowledge and objectivity in accounting in accounting conceptual frameworks.

In the next chapter, an overview of the conceptual frameworks used is given, before moving onto the methodological chapter. In the next chapter, a description is given of these frameworks in order to assist the reader in understanding the history of conceptual frameworks chosen. The thesis explains what a conceptual framework is, and how the conceptual frameworks' taken for granted literalness demands that conceptual frameworks be studied for their implicit/submerged vision metaphors, that, it is argued, go largely unnoticed in the presumed descriptive objectivity of such frameworks.

3.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS: SUBMERGED METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE

Overall, the vision metaphor becomes significant, mainly to understand two things. First, that *submerged metaphors, such as Vision as objective knowledge* are largely underexplored. And second, because these metaphors are deeply lodged within the discourse of the conceptual framework and not so obvious/overt, they are not understood entirely well.

Moreover, since vision is a metaphor that is concealed, these metaphors do not merely derive from subjectivity (a person's own personal needs). Deeper conceptual metaphors, such as *Vision as Objective Knowledge*, derive from the effective world. The derive from the way

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[87] Accounting conceptual frameworks are viewed as essentially productive sites (Hines, 1991)

the world comes to shape experiences, and the metaphors/language we share at a fundamentally deeper, almost unconscious level.

Vision, for instance, is the reference point against which conceptual frameworks measure their success. Yet it refers to a form of knowledge. A knowledge that is little explored; especially in accounting regulation where overt metaphors are fewer. Vision remains a largely concealed, non-deliberate metaphor in apparently neutral, objective, and universal, that alienates the body as an obstruction to truth, knowledge and objectivity. But because of this, because vision is veiled in accounting regulation, the concept of what vision is in accounting conceptual frameworks, there is understanding of the evolving and changing complexion of this metaphor over time, due to changes in the development of society, for example, from modernity to postmodernity, as explained in this chapter. There are other visual regimes. And this change depends largely on the practices, contexts and historical periods within which vision, this deep, conceptual metaphor, is situated.

So, the conceptual framework is a place where such non-overt metaphors can be identified. It is presumed that *Vision as objective knowledge* is an unrecognizable and nuanced conceptual metaphor whose evolution in accounting conceptual frameworks goes unnoticed, existing because of a deeper, embodied, perceptual relationship with the world; it is a metaphor that is, crucially, entrenched within western discourse (Sweetser, 1990) that we normally fail to access or think to challenge. It is so unacknowledged in accounting regulatory discourse, it is argued, in the next chapter, that it is viewed as a buried, submerged, and non-deliberate metaphor that cannot be so readily alterable.

This buried, submerged side of vision metaphor has not been recognized in the accounting literature before. And It is thought here that a good place to start would be to analyze vision metaphors as largely submerged metaphors, that appear in accounting regulatory corpora: accounting conceptual frameworks.

CHAPTER 4 - ACCOUNTING REGULATION: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

In this brief chapter, some background is given to the conceptual frameworks[88] that are studied in the thesis. A short history of the development of conceptual frameworks, beginning with the AICPA, is presented and is presumed necessary for the reader. The reason for this is to give some idea about how accounting knowledge is conceptualized/constructed/represented in the frameworks studied.

Just to remind the reader, the conceptual framework in itself is seen as a site for the construction and maintenance of a kind of visual knowledge, and is political in its formation (Hines, 1991, 1992). The reason for studying conceptual frameworks is because conceptual frameworks represent the best empirical/analytical basis to study the metaphorical evolution of objective knowledge. That is, accounting frameworks make declarative utterances that are present in a relevant and objective literal manner. Where statements are presupposed maximally informative, accounting assumes knowledge of economic phenomena via its concepts[89]. Where those concepts are built on latent metaphorical assumptions: separation, distance, disengagement, it is assumed there is a transparency underlying the symbolism of vision that conceptualizes the modernist constitution of the eye as inner reflection (*Vision as Mind*). This metaphor, however, is not automatically assumed given such anxieties demonstrated in the previous chapter. This is the reason why conceptual frameworks are studied in this thesis.

This chapter provides some background to the reader: to show generally what a conceptual framework is, what it mainly consists of, and what its epistemological presumptions appear to be. The chapter attempts to unpick the conceptual frameworks' basic, unchanging structure, its literalness, and how it is that accounting regulation maintains accounting knowledge, in spite of the many challenges frameworks have faced.

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[88] For a more extensive history of Conceptual framework, see Macve (1981), also International GAAP 2008/2010 by International Financial Reporting Group of Ernst and Young.

[89] Conceptual frameworks wish to communicate to readers that financial accounting statements depict accurately what occurs in organizations for economic users (Solomons, 1991), so that capital markets function efficiently and effectively (Arnold, 2009). These frameworks also endorse an absolute form of visual knowing: "The idea that accounting representations are, or could be, unambiguous, that is, unequivocal re-presentations of an uninterpreted reality is regularly asserted in both professional and academic literatures", (McSweeney, 1997, p. 691).

Overall, the chapter hopefully conveys that accounting regulators maintain and solidify a strong sense of objective knowledge. Yet, importantly for the thesis, the objectivity and knowledge that conceptual frameworks impart appear to be conditioned through the appearance of a submerged vision metaphor; where accounting signs must correspondence/be applied to the financial reality, in order to make visible what goes on outside of accounting regulation.

In the construction of and sustaining a particular capitalist world view, accounting conceptual frameworks primarily set out to establish and protect a regulatory mindset for a user/viewer/subject: a faithful representation to an extant financial reality (Hines, 1991, 1992). And this implied vision is partly hidden submerged, as conceptually governing the rule making process. And where conceptual metaphors exist, there appears to be imbedded, submerged metaphors, those that form part of the structure and constitution of the way things are. That is, the conceptual frameworks represent an institutionally complicated discourse, with evolving metaphorical meanings that accounting regulators consider to be objective knowledge.

The chapter hopes to highlight some of the effort required in the beginning in order to maintain a strong sense of objectivity and knowledge through institutional statements and discourses in order to protect and secure a universal and irreversible foundation of accounting as an independent, neutral and objective practice. How this construction of conceptual framework is achieved in the conceptual framework is explored here and in the next few chapters. Even though this chapter is fairly descriptive, the purpose of it is to highlight some of the conventional, conceptual thinking that resides within the production of the framework, as a site for construction and the maintenance of accounting knowledge, and of course, accounting objectivity. The various way in which frameworks contribute and commit to that construction is explored here.

Just to note, the AICPA's Trueblood report is not included as part of the empirical analysis (please refer to chapter 6). But it is felt that the report does provide some basic underlying intuition on the way future conceptual frameworks develop. Moreover, FASB, the Financial Accounting Standards Board, the U.S non-profit standard setting accounting body, played a key role in the formative development of such conceptual frameworks. FASB may be seen as the main historical influence here. A framework from which other conceptual frameworks

have taken their conceptual lead. This chapter, therefore, should be seen as a general overview of the conceptual frameworks that is used in this thesis[90]; why it is these frameworks are consistent in their maintenance of vision, generally viewed from its emphasis on a faithful representation of financial reality.

As a reminder to the reader, the frameworks analyzed for this study are as follows: the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) project, from 1978 to 1985, the International Accounting Standards Board's (IASB) 1989 framework, the UK conceptual framework (Statement of Principles) and the more recent IASB 2010, and the IASB 2015 Exposure Draft[91].

Overall, this chapter attempts to provide a rationale for studying conceptual frameworks in the way it is done here. The rationale for studying conceptual frameworks is to uncover some of the taken for granted, conceptual vision metaphors of accounting regulation: the perhaps unseen or unacknowledged aspects of vision, that appear mostly incontrovertible to financial accounting regulators, and which, it is examined, evolve over time. At the end of this chapter, a conclusion is provided, where it is suggested that the conceptual frameworks studied here appear to provide very few overt instances of metaphorical language. In spite of this, it is observed that the financial accounting conceptual framework is a metaphorical process nonetheless. It is one that attempts to hold firm to perhaps concealed, unacknowledged submerged conceptually inherited metaphorical language. It is understood that because of this, the research method used here distinguishes and tracks the submerged, subconscious figurative aspects of vision appearing in accounting conceptual frameworks.

4.1 THE AICPA 1971- 1973

In 1961, Maurice Moonitz developed *The Basic Postulates of Accounting*, which was a step towards developing a set of axioms for financial accounting standard setting (See Gore, 1992). The aim was to give a set of general guidelines for accountants to help improve accounting practice. In 1971, the AICPA formed two groups: The Wheat committee (chaired by Francis Wheat) and The Trueblood committee (chaired by Robert Trueblood). The main

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[90] We appreciate there have been many conceptual frameworks: The Corporate report issued in the UK (1975) and the Stamp Report (1980) in Canada are just two of many frameworks that have attempted throughout the world.

[91] At the time of writing the thesis, the new CF remains finished. The IASB expects publication in the first quarter of 2018.

aim of these groups was to better improve the objectives of financial statements. For instance, the Trueblood report, published in October 1973, explained that the objective of financial statements would be to provide accounting information that was useful for making economic decisions:

> "An objective of financial statements is to provide information useful to investors and creditors for predicting, comparing, and evaluating potential cash flows to them in terms of amount, timing, and related certainty."

> (AICPA, 1973, p.20 and p.62).

Therefore, the statement outlined that accounting information should, "serve primarily those users who have limited authority, ability, or resources to obtain information and rely on financial statements as their principal source of information about an enterprise's economic activities' (AICPA, page, 17) [92]. And so, the framework would go onto provide certain kinds of qualitative characteristics for financial statements in order to be useful for decision making: relevance, reliability, materiality, consistency, comparability, understand-ability and freedom from bias: qualitative dimensions that formed part of AICPA's report. These objectives, according to Zeff (1999), were those of other members who had seen that the qualitative characteristics had not been greatly successful.

4.2 THE FASB CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK (1978 – 1985)

The Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) recognized the need for a framework that would help in developing good, objective accounting standards. In 1978, FASB produced the SFAC No. 1 statement, *Objectives of Financial Reporting by Business Enterprises,* which explained the different sources of information that would accompany financial accounting information. It explained that financial statements were but one source of information that was useful for making economic decisions. Moreover, the statement then detailed that users that would make use of financial accounting information in order to assess

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92 That decision useful information was seen to better reflect the evolution of alternative accounting treatments. A conceptual framework for financial statements appeared in the "Objectives of Financial Statements" (1973). And the objectives promoted different treatments within "A Statement of Basic Accounting Theory (ASOBAT)". ASOBAT provided a set of treatments, placing decision usefulness central as, "the process of identifying, measuring, and communicating the economic information to permit informed judgements and decisions by users of information" (American Accounting Association, 1966, p.1). The most appropriate accounting information was accounting information that met user ("investor") needs.

the stewardship of assets. The SFAC No. 1 recognized the importance of economic performance, through a focus on earnings measurement that would meet most user needs:

> "Earnings information is commonly the focus for assessing management's stewardship or accountability. Management, owners, and others emphasize enterprise performance or profitability in describing how management has discharged its stewardship accountability"

> (SFAC No. 1, Paragraph 51, November 1978)

In the 1980, FASB developed SFAC no. 2, *Qualitative Characteristics of Accounting Information.* This statement declared the basic qualitative characteristics that would make accounting information useful to financial statement users. Therefore, if information did not meet these qualitative criteria, financial statements would unlikely provide users with a certain standard of quality information that would assist them in making sound economic decisions. Therefore, accounting information would have to have the kind of characteristics that would be of importance to users. And those were reliability and relevance.

These two characteristics would be deemed very important because these qualities were, "the two primary qualities that make accounting information useful for decision making" (FASB, 1980, p. 5). The SFAC No. 2 statement recognized therefore that relevant information allowed users to make decisions. Relevant accounting information that should help users to make decisions must have feedback or predictive value or both. Timeliness was also an ancillary aspect of relevance: "Timeliness, that is, having information available to decision-makers before it loses its capacity to influence decisions, is an ancillary aspect of relevance." (SFAC No. 2, p. 5). Moreover, FASB define reliable information as the correspondence between accounting representation and objects and events, a faithful representation of economic events[93]: "The reliability of a measure rests on the faithfulness with which it represents what it purports to represent, coupled with an assurance for the user that it has that representational quality" (p. 6). FASB explained that that there should be a degree of

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[93] Solomon's disliked the approach the AICPA took: "These appeals to evolution should be seen as what they are – a cop out. If all that is needed to improve our accounting model is reliance on evolution and the natural selection that results from the development of standards, why was an expensive and protracted conceptual framework project necessary in the first place? It goes without saying that concepts and practices should evolve as conditions change. But if the conceptual framework can do no more than point that out, who needs it? And, for that matter, if progress is simply a matter of waiting for evolution, who needs FASB" (Solomons (1986) cited in Zeff, 1999, p. 116).

correspondence between accounting information and economic events [94] , and that accountants should give a good faithful representation, without too much "distortion":

> "Just as a *distorting mirror reflects* a *warped image* of the person standing in front of it or just as an inexpensive loudspeaker fails to *reproduce faithfully* the sounds that went into the microphone or onto the phonograph records, so a bad model gives a distorted *representation* of the system that it models. The question that accountants must face continually is *how much distortion is acceptable*[95]*."

> (FASB, 1980, para. 76)

Relevance and Reliability, of course, would become the two pillars of the qualitative characteristics of accounting information that would make accounting information decision useful:

> "Subject to constraints imposed by cost and materiality, increased relevance and increased reliability are the characteristics that make information a more desirable commodity—that is, one useful in making decisions. If either of those qualities is completely missing, the information will not be useful. Though, ideally, the choice of an accounting alternative should produce information that is both more reliable and more relevant, it may be necessary to sacrifice some of one quality for a gain in another."

> (FASB, SFAC no. 2 p.5).

In December 1984 FASB developed its SFAC No. 5 Recognition and Measurement statement. This statement explained the process of recognition and measurement of economic events and objects. They explain recognition as, "the process of formally recording or incorporating an item into the financial statements of an entity as an asset, liability, revenue, expense or the like" (p.2). However, this did not go down too well with

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[94] This is also reflected earlier in Sterling (1979): "Our financial statements ought to provide descriptions and explanations of empirical phenomena. We should seek laws and theories which will allow us to predict (in the scientific sense) those phenomena. In short, as accounting seems to imply, the principal objective ought to be to account for empirical phenomena" (Sterling, 1979, p. 13)

[95] According to Zeff, Solomon's personal influence on the document should not be underestimated. Most of the metaphors derive from Solomons' metaphors, such as speedometers, barometer and maps (Zeff, 1999). Referring to the Statements No 2 Statement, Zeff writes, "The analysis is logically and sensibly ordered, it is well explained (reflecting Solomon's penchant for metaphors) and the terms are carefully defined (1999, p. 110).

Solomons. Solomons, who at the time had played a large and significant role in the development of the SFAC No. 2, qualitative characteristic statement, was left rather unimpressed by the Concepts statement:

> "Under a rigorous grading system, I would give the Concepts statement No. 5 an F and require the board take the course again – that is, to scrap the statement and start again."

> (In International GAAP, 2008, p. 108)

The statement did not, according to Solomons, resolve any of the issues of recognition and measurement that accountants required at that time. The statement, according to Solomons, provided nothing more than an overview of present practice – such as measuring as historic cost, current cost, and fair value. Therefore, the SFAC no. 5 was incomplete in a number of respects and was much criticized by Solomons: "my judgement of the project as a whole must be that it has failed (GAAP, 2008, p. 109). Yet another statement was published. This time FASB produced the SFAC No. 6, Elements statement, which was issued in 1985, as a replacement to concepts statement No.3. This statement outlined the ten conceptual elements that would help assist in explaining financial performance and position. These were: assets, liabilities, equity, owner investment, distribution to owners, comprehensive income and revenue, expenses, gains and losses.

In conclusion, FASB's conceptual framework overall was seen to be a much more constrained conceptual framework. According to Solomons, it did not perform particularly well in terms of dealing with "the controversial issues of recognition and measurement about which accountants have disagreed for years" (GAAP, 2008, p. 108). However, the SFAC No 2, made very interesting points, and the influential thinking of David Solomons on the qualitative characteristics statement made some impact on the development of subsequent International Accounting Standards Board's frameworks. In the next section, the IASB[96] 1989 is considered. It is recognized that FASB has laid much of the conceptual groundwork for much of the efforts of international conceptual frameworks subsequently.

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[96] The IASB stands for the International Accounting Standards Board and this is used throughout as well as speaking about the IASC, which was formed in 1973 and was replaced by the IASB in 2001. The IASB is used for brevity.

4.3 THE INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTING STANDARD BOARD (1989)

On September 1989, the IASB (then the IASC) developed its own international framework. This would be the IASB's first framework that would be the first step towards international harmonization. On first inspection, the document is relatively concise and similar to the previous FASB effort, but as a sort of shorthand demonstration of accounting regulation. Its aim, mainly, was:

> "To assist the Board of the IASC in the development of future International Accounting Standards and in its review of existing International Accounting Standards."

> (IASB, 1989, para. 1)

Capital providers are the primary financial statement user again. And the IASB attempts to identify the objective of financial statements to be useful for all stakeholders in this regard, giving primacy to those who provide capital.

> "While all of the information needs of these users cannot be met by financial statement there are needs which are common to all users. As investors are providers of risk capital to the entity, the provision of financial statements that meet their needs will also meet most of the needs of other users that financial statements can satisfy."

> (IASB, 1989, para. 10)

This would mean that accounting information would be considered useful if the IASB presented information on an entity's financial positioning: assets, liabilities, equity, gains and losses:

> "This information is useful in providing the user with a basis to assess the ability of the entity to generate cash and cash equivalents and the needs of the entity to utilise those cash flows. In constructing a statement of changes in financial position funds can be defined in various ways, such as all financial resources, working capital, liquid assets or cash."

(IASB, 1989, para. 18)

The IASB explains that:

> "The objective of financial statements is to provide information about the financial position performance and changes in financial position of an entity that is useful to a wide range of users in making economic decisions."

(IASB, 1989, para. 12).

the IASB 1989 framework is a rather condensed document. And it is recognized that the framework is a fairly derivative effort of FASB's SFAC's qualitative characteristics. Rather, the IASB's framework is expressed in a much more reductive, apparently literal manner, and, Solomon's flair for metaphors (Zeff, 1999) is absent. The statement covers Qualitative characteristics, Elements of Financial Statements and Recognition and Measurement. On reading, the qualitative characteristics section of the framework, it is recognized that the IASB thinks objectivity is an accurate reflection, similar to FASB that preceded it, to be a faithful representation of transactions and events:

> "To be reliable, information must represent faithfully the transactions and other events it either purports to represent or could reasonably be expected to represent."

(IASB, 1989, para. 34)

Moreover, in terms of relevance, the IASB also explains that:

> "Information has the quality of relevance when it influences the economic decisions of users by helping them evaluate past, present or future events or confirming, or correcting, their past evaluations."

(IASB, 1989, para. 26)

The elements of financial statements, again, is very similar to FASB's initial conceptual elements No.6 statement in 1985. It describes assets, liabilities, equity, and income and expenses, and the process of recognition and measurement. The IASB's rather clear

qualification of faithful representation below reveals the association with the recognition criteria and what is considered to be a faithful representation:

> "Thus, for example, a balance sheet should represent faithfully the transactions and other events that result in assets, liabilities and equity of the entity at the reporting date *which meet the recognition criteria."*

> (IASB, 1989, para 33, *emphasis added*)

It is noticed that the IASB moved to a balance sheet approach,

> "Income is recognized in the income statement when an increase in future economic benefits related to an increase in an asset or a decrease of a liability has arisen and can be measured reliably. This means, in effect, that recognition of income occurs simultaneously with the recognition of increases in assets or decreases in liabilities."

And in terms of measurement of elements of financial statements, the IASB explains measurement as:

> "The process of determining the monetary amounts at which the elements of the financial statements are to be recognized and carried in the balance sheet the incomes statement. This involves the selection of the particular basis of measurement."

However, the IASB makes no explicit reference to fair value[97], as this is not considered a measurement base in the IASB's conceptual framework. Overall, the IASB is rather reticent regarding the appropriate measurement base to use and under which situations a particular measurement base should be made more appropriate than others under certain circumstances.

Overall, the IASB is much smaller in size, approximately 10,000 words, and is fairly derivative of FASB's much larger framework and it makes no use of any Solomons'

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[97] Fair value is the amount for which an asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction. See Horton and Macve (2000) for a discussion of fair value for financial instruments and related income statement and balance sheet problems. Also see O'Brien (2009) who questions some of the issues on fair value accounting in the now failed IASB-FASB joint project, specifically purging concepts that would hinder the development of fair value valuations in balance sheets.

interesting metaphors in SFAC No. 2 Qualitative characteristics. In the next section, some background is given to the next framework: the UK's Statement of Principles.

4.4 THE UK ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD (1999)

In December 1999, the UK Accounting Standards Board (ASB) developed its own conceptual framework, its *Statement of Principles*. Incidentally, the chairman Sir David Tweedie, was also the chairman of the IASB at that time. The statement of principles consists of eight chapters and is rather redolent of the other FASB and IASB efforts. The framework lays out the main objectives of financial statements: those are, the qualitative characteristics of financial statements, the statements' elements and also, recognition and measurement. The UK statement also has chapters on accounting for interests in other entities, and has one chapter on the reporting entity.

From the outset, the ASB Statement of Principles seems committed to the needs of users, with a focus on investor needs in particular. The ASB initially expressed concern over the drive towards the more relevant current value (exchange value), over the more reliable cost (historical or replacement) model. This represented a shift away from "conventional accounting" (Nobes, 1999, p. 48-50), and towards the more relevant, fair value accounting. From this perspective, the ASB presented the accountant somewhat with a choice that would result in an inevitable conflict over the prevailing qualitative characteristics: whether to be more reliable in reporting or more relevant. The current value model would depend on information needs, with a particular focus on user needs. Those users who require even more relevant and up-to-date accounting information reflecting the needs consistent with the increasing financialization of the global economy (Boyer, 2007).

In terms of the trade-off between reliability and relevance, it is quite clear where the ASB places its allegiance:

> "If a choice exists between relevant and reliable approaches that are mutually exclusive, the approach chosen needs to be the one that results in the relevance of the information provided being maximized."

> (ASB, 1999, Ch. 3)

It is the UK Statement of Principles that takes seriously the shift towards a more relevant, fair value orientation. Something, as mentioned, that the IASB, ten years prior, failed to mention. The UK framework raises questions over the orientation of accounting conceptual framework development. The ASB 1999 makes clear that the objective of statements is, "to help prepares and auditors faced with new or emerging issues to carry out an initial analysis of the issues involved in the absence of applicable accounting standards" (ASB, 1999, para. 4). One of the emerging issues was whether a move towards fair value would prevail, which, in comparison with the more verifiable, historic cost model, would result in inevitable problems for auditors to guarantee fair value valuations.

Yet, in keeping with other frameworks, the ASB, again, appears to maintain that objectivity is a purely visual concept and is consistent with earlier framework conceptions. In other words, it remains faithful to the ideal of correspondence, associating accounting objectivity and neutrality with the more verifiable cost model conceptions of accounting. Similar to FASB, and to the 1989 international effort, the ASB appears little different, despite the choices between fair value and historic cost. As the UK standards board explains, the accountant should remain faithful to a correspondence between accounting and economic objects or events:

> "Information is reliable if: (a) it can be depended upon by users to represent faithfully what it either purports to represent or could reasonably be expected to represent."

> (ASB, 1999, Ch. 3)

In terms of elements, there is, additionally, little difference from the previous conceptual frameworks. There is, again, little variation from prior framework conceptions.

4.5 THE INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD (2010)

The International Accounting Standards Board issued its Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting in September 2010. This international framework is not explored in too much detail here, except to say that the IASB 2010[98] framework overlaps substantially with the IASB 1989 in mainly all respects. The IASB 2010 is yet another international framework whose objective remains consistent with all other prior frameworks:

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[98] The IASB and FASB worked on a joint project to converge IFRS and US GAAP. However, 2012 saw the end of this project.

"The objective of general purpose financial reporting is to provide financial information about the reporting entity that is useful to existing and potential investors, lenders, and other creditors in making decisions about providing resources to the entity."

(IASB, 2010, p. 5)

The IASB 2010 makes it particularly clear that the primary user group has the most to gain and the most to lose. That is, those who are participants in capital markets will help in the development of future accounting standard setting. And so, the IASB assume by implication that meeting the needs of investors will be the most effective way to meet the needs of all users. Incidentally, in December 2014, the newly established user forum, the Investors in Financial Reporting program[99] for accounting, sees potential investors as having a greater influence on the development of accounting standards, with the assistance from leading asset managers and asset owners. The aim of the project is specifically to provide information that will assist these users in appraising the future economic prospects of the entity; that is, cash inflows. The IASB's motivation appears to be clear, narrowing public engagement and addressing only those who use accounting reports as representatives of investing classes, as evidenced in the 2014 user forum.

In terms of qualitative characteristics, the IASB substitutes "reliability" for "faithful representation". The IASB explains that "reliability" is too unclear, explaining that respondents associate "reliability with precision". Yet, this is neither here nor there. Like all other frameworks, the IASB appears to remain committed to faithful representation. Where a realist epistemology of the passive, receptive objectivity of mind takes shape. It would appear that financial accounting rests on correspondence foundations that accord with an ahistorical objectivist paradigm. The aim of the financial accountant is merely to receive data from the stable, pre-structured objective world, providing a report of that data:

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[99] On the 2ⁿᵈ of December 2014, the IASB announced the launch of the Investors in Financial Reporting, created with the "support of some of the world's leading asset managers and owners, the program is designed to foster greater investor participation in the development of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS Website, Alerts, Press Releases). It is recognized that the increase in the investor participation is paramount to the quality of financial information. It has yet to welcome active participation from outside the investment community. The IASB has committed to its Statement of Shared Beliefs, which takes the view from many *within* the ranks of the investing community.

"Financial information must not only represent relevant phenomena, but it must also faithfully represent the phenomena that it purports to represent."

(IASB, 2010, QC. 12)

With regard to elements, there is very little, if any, difference from the IASB 1989 framework. In terms of measurement, the IASB 2010 explains the measurement of assets, liabilities and equity in the balance sheet, and the measurement of income and expenses in the income statement. For Recognition, the IASB explains that an item is recognized in the financial statements when,

- it meets the definition of an element
- it is probable that any future economic benefit associated with the item will flow to or from the entity
- the item has a cost or value that can be measured reliably

Nevertheless, The IASB 2010 sets out much in the same way IASB 1989 framework, where it seems that large segments appear to be taken directly from the earlier 1989 framework. It has almost identical structure too: the qualitative characteristics, elements and recognition and measurement chapters remain unchanged, appearing to be plainly influenced by a sense of value neutrality and descriptive objectivity that makes it remarkably similar to all preceding frameworks. The IASB 2010 upholds, again, these other frameworks' values; a very strict conception that accounting objectivity should be a, "neutral depiction" of objective reality:

"A neutral depiction is without bias in the selection or presentation of financial information. A neutral depiction is not slanted, weighted, emphasized, de-emphasized or otherwise manipulated to increase the probability that financial information will be received favorably or unfavorably by users."

(IASB, 2010, QC. 14)

Overall, the IASB 2010 is virtually unrecognizable from the 1989 framework. Both are somewhat counterparts. And is indicative of how little difference there appears to be in the structure and content of the two frameworks. Frameworks appear to cling to concepts of faithful representation that implies that the way accounting regulators perceive things map

the way the world really is. This seems particular dogmatic, yet it rests deep within the mindset of accounting regulation.

In the next section, the 2015 International Accounting Standard Board's Exposure draft is discussed. At the time of writing this thesis, the new conceptual framework 2018 is not finalize. The inclusion of the IFRS 2015 exposure draft is presumed a suitable proxy for the current framework, and may shed some light on some of future similarities or differences that might emerge.

4.6 INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTING STANDARD BOARD'S EXPOSURE DRAFT (2015)

The recent IFRS 2015 Exposure Draft, issued in May 2015, proposes some changes to the current IASB 2010 framework. The framework itself was expected in 2017; however, the IASB has now stated that the IASB expects a revised conceptual framework around the end of the first quarter of 2018. Again, the draft covers the same content as other frameworks. It covers objectives of financial reporting, qualitative characteristics, elements, and recognition and measurement.

Even though changes are proposed, the qualitative characteristics have changed little from the 2010 framework, and the Exposure Draft (ED) reveals that the new framework will also change in little in degree from the previous framework. In particular, the draft proposes a re-introduction of the concept of prudence, stating that, in para 2.18, that "neutrality is supported by the exercise of prudence". On receiving feedback from constituents, the ED has also included a more general discussion on the stewardship of resources, without specifically referring to "stewardship". The draft explains that stewardship should be an overall objective of corporate reporting, meaning that general purpose financial statements should provide users with information that enables them to assess how well management have discharged their responsibilities in terms of the entity's resources:

> "This Exposure Draft: (i) clarifies that the information needed to meet the objective
> of financial reporting includes information that can be used to help assess
> management's stewardship of the entity's resources; (ii) explains the roles of
> prudence and substance over form in financial reporting; (iii) clarifies that a high
> level of measurement uncertainty can make financial information less relevant…."

Overall, the 2015 Draft appears to remain committed to remaining faithful to previous frameworks. The 2015 Exposure Draft starts like all other frameworks, outlining the conceptual framework's main topics, and what they will likely be:

- Objectives of general purpose of financial reporting
- Qualitative characteristics of useful financial information
- General purpose financial statements and reporting entities
- Elements of financial statements
- Recognition and de-recognition
- Measurement
- Presentation and Disclosure
- Concepts of capital and capital maintenance

Elements have remained largely unchanged. However, the Exposure Draft proposes changes to the definition of asset, explaining that an asset is a "present economic resource controlled by an entity as a result of past events" (para. 4.4). They make clear that assets are rights, including, it seems, tangible and intangible assets. The Exposure Draft also proposes that liabilities be defined as a "present obligation of the entity to transfer an economic resource as a result of past events" (para 4.4). For recognition, the IASB suggests that an asset of liability be recognized if it provides users of financial statements with relevant information about assets, liability, income, expense or changes in equity, and if it provides a faithful representation of the asset, liability, income expense or change in equity, given the cost-benefit constraints.

One of the interesting points that is raised within the Exposure Draft is existence uncertainty. The ED explains that certain assets and liabilities are subject to existence uncertainty and that this may lead to the conclusion that the recognition of that asset or liability may not lead to relevant information, where relevance is one of the fundamental qualitative characteristics of financial statements:

> "Some assets, for example, rights to benefit from items such as know-how and customer or supplier relationships, are not contractual or other legal rights. It may therefore be uncertain whether there is an asset or whether it is separable from the business as a whole (that is, it may be unclear whether there is an asset distinct from goodwill). In some such cases, uncertainty about the existence of an asset combined with the difficulty of separately identifying the asset may mean that recognition may not provide relevant information. 5. 16 For some liabilities, it may be unclear whether a past event causing an obligation has occurred. For example, if another party claims that the entity has committed an act of wrongdoing and should compensate the other

party for that act, it may be uncertain whether the act occurred or whether the entity committed it. In some such cases, the uncertainty about the existence of an obligation, possibly combined with a low probability of outflows of economic benefits and a high level of measurement uncertainty, may mean that the recognition of a single amount would not provide relevant information."

(IASB, Exposure Draft 2015, para. 5.15-5.16)

The framework also suggests that the aim of the framework is to be representationally faithful[100] and also, relevant. These are the two fundamental qualitative characteristics of financial reporting. And the IASB remains faithful to the same references to faithful representation as a correspondence between accounting measurement and the objective structure of reality.

'Financial reports represent economic phenomena in words and numbers. To be useful, financial information must not only represent relevant phenomena, but it must also faithfully represent the phenomena that it purports to represent."

(IASB, Exposure Draft, 2015, para. 2.14)

The Exposure draft (ED) provides evidence of just how little the frameworks have changed since the 1980s. The ED reveals that future frameworks commit to financial accounting as essentially a consensus of opinion that derives from the community of investors. It is clear that such statements are consistent throughout each of the frameworks. And the exposure draft appears to narrow its focus on investing classes. The recent IASB conceptual framework (2010) and the (2015) Exposure Draft, and some of the discussions in the 2014 discussion paper, also uphold a completely representational model that effectively reveals, on first inspection, strict to adherence to concepts, of a deductive nature, where objectivity seems to hold firm to representational claims of vision and reflection. The IASB can be best seen as a way to deal with problems through increasing attempts to provide representational models (valuation oriented balance sheet) – to fervently create fastidious coherent concepts that model – at the expense of really exposing the labor or effort that has gone into producing this model for accounting users. And the recent conceptual framework states that,

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[100] In the 2014 Discussion Paper, faithful representation is conceived in terms of consensus: "…Knowledgeable and independent observers could reach consensus, although not necessarily complete agreement, that a particular depiction is a faithful representation…" (IFRS, Discussion Paper, 2014, QC. 26).

"The objective of the project is to improve financial reporting by providing a more complete, clear and **updated** set of concepts."

(The IASB, Exposure Draft, 2015, p. 6)

Overall, the Exposure Draft has proposed amendments to IFRS 2, IFRS 3, IFRS 4, IFRS 6, IAS 1, IAS 8, IAS 34, SIC-27 and SIC-32, and have been met with much approval in the public comments letter section. Yet, on first reading, the ED appears to be attempting to maintain certain concepts. An early publication of the revised framework may not resolve or is unlikely to evolve into anything novel, and may be hamstrung by appearing to be putting the final touches to concepts rather than reverse them/open them up to wider debate.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This conceptual framework overview chapter merely provides a brief supportive background to the conceptual framework period studied, why it was chosen for study, and how the analysis of vision metaphors should take shape in the next chapter. The taken for granted realism that continues to play out in the framework demonstrates that accounting conceptual frameworks is an absolute foundation for accounting knowledge at the same time remaining firm to narrow concepts that are little subjected to withstand scrutiny: vision, transparency and positivist objectivity [101].

This chapter is used here to give the reader some sense about what a conceptual framework is, what comprises its basic content, and what sort of concepts and ideals it seeks to expound. On first inspection, it is read that the frameworks are almost identical in structure and content and change little, if indeed at all. All frameworks appeal to a common thread of faithful representation as a taken for granted metaphor. In this regard, frameworks are influenced by an epistemological realism from the outset, which seeks to establish a clear set of rules in order to build accurate representations of a conceptual-independent objective reality. With this deeply metaphoric concept intact, accounting conceptual frameworks stand on the side of modernist positivism, with its emphasis on literalism and aversion for strong metaphors.

A dualism of viewing subjects and viewed objects exists, where accounting standard setters develop new standards for a notional accounting user as constructed viewer (Young, 2006),

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[101] We perform a content analysis on the 1973 Trueblood report is not included as part of our analysis. We mention the AICPA Objectives or Trueblood report because it gives some background: it is not considered a conceptual framework.

and the world of economic phenomena become viewed objects with attached features of valuable, ownership rights.

A hierarchy of user needs exists: the investor being the primary stakeholder. That is, conceptual frameworks appear to remain faithful to a representational mode of thinking without acknowledging the metaphorical. An approach that places faith in the objectivity and truth of efficient markets. Despite years of post-modern, discursive and linguistic challenges to the mainstream of accounting literature, the conceptual frameworks appear to remain faithful to vision, neutrality and representational faithfulness.

Here, the aim of the conceptual framework as a whole appears to underpin this strong conceptual sense of *Vision as Knowledge*: mirroring, passivity and accurate reflection. But there are also other forms of effort to *maintain* a form of knowledge: how well accounting rules *attempt* to reflect some out-there, mind, pre-existent independent reality is a deeply embedded conventional metaphor that functions to blur the distinction between overt metaphorical language and scientific, literal and objective straight talking. It is recognized that the initial FASB framework influences future conceptual frameworks, and it is from FASB's framework that subsequent frameworks have drawn most of their conceptions, language, opinions and epistemological loyalties.

Interestingly, at some time around the UK ASB 1999, there appeared to be some anxiety over conventions of reliability. The correspondence based, historical cost based model was being threatened by increasing reliance of market data, fair value. Conceptions of reliability and a faithful representation underpinned the cost model was being slowly challenged by market as mirror. However, the move towards decision relevance, and the need for users to have good predictive and feedback value, saw the UK Standards Board lean towards a fair value model, attempting to correspond accounting measurements to market valuations.

Yet overall the conceptual framework is a project which is ongoing, extending the faith of prior frameworks conclusions. Frameworks, even though some 40 years on from the very first US Financial Accounting Standard Board's first effort, still hold firmly to modernist concepts that were shared and expounded in the initial FASB statement, and from which a lot of concepts can be seen today as remaining faithful to original concepts that are extended throughout. Those metaphors that David Solomons produced in the SFAC No. 2 Statement appear to remain even in a more literal, unearthed or extended metaphorical manner; even though frameworks do not explicitly say they do.

Therefore, this chapter gives the reader some idea about the similarities between frameworks generally, and the taken for granted-ness of its metaphoricity, its underlying assumptions and their general conceptual brevity. That frameworks do hold onto some metaphysical conceptions of Profit/Loss seems to struggle in the objectivity of global capitalism and a world that imposes other social obligations of firms to be more "environmental" or more "social".

In the next chapter, the thesis here attempts to get past the old dualisms of Vision/Blind and literal/metaphorical, that is found in the literature. This is by positing that metaphors go unnoticed in the frameworks, are tied up to our conceptions of reality through experience. Using the popular science work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999), the thesis explores the possibility of *Vision as Knowledge* as a transformative concept. But still a deeply entrenched concept in the thinking and mindset of accounting regulators. That is, the conceptual metaphor is not singular but multiple in its functioning throughout the mindset of accounting regulation it is presumed.

In the literature, there appears to be a shift from knowledge to incomprehension, from vision to blindness, with no in-between. The study tries to demonstrate, using the thoughts of Lakoff and Johnson, the space between the Vision (knowledge)/Blindness (no knowledge) duality, and the differences in *Vision as Knowledge* metaphor as a move towards a broader, multifaceted conception of vision as a source domain for knowledge in financial accounting. That is, vision is knowledge is a far gone and unseen metaphor that functions in an unconscious and quite subtle way in the construction of accounting conceptual frameworks as a homogenous whole.

Therefore, the study undertaken has to consider the fluidity of concepts of knowledge too, in frameworks. Meaning this conceptual and deeply buried metaphor as unfixed across time. *Vision as Knowledge* is transformative, dependent on time, environment and the practices in which subjects engage, and cannot simply mean: distance, disembodiment and passive reflection.

Knowledge in accounting is not simply vision as an absolute foundation for knowledge: an epistemological certainty. Nor has knowledge disappeared. The meaning of *Vision as Knowledge* is therefore dependent on changes subjects interact with objects in different time. And this is explored in the next chapter. Vision may be understood as conceptually distant, disengaged, disinterested and disembodied, but ultimately submerged; informed through consensus made by regulators over the years that has informed accounting thought. Until a

very different type of vision fractures the accepted norm of vision, conceptualizing knowledge in the conceptual framework over time, until a new type of vision appears.

In the next chapter, Lakoff and Johnson's methodology is used to seek out the differences at work in conceptual frameworks. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999) is used in order to see how, if indeed, Accounting knowledge as Vision, evolves. It is concluded that Vision as Knowledge is fragmented into various areas, and is not a unitary form of knowledge in accounting conceptual frameworks.

CHAPTER 5 - METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH: VISION AND EMBODIED COGNITION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In chapter two (literature review), the aim was to outline the way in which metaphor appeared to be usually thought in the accounting literature. It was argued, in part, that the accounting literature conceives of metaphor in a specific way: overt, foregrounded, easily identifiable and accessible, and of the language of accounting regulation. However, if indeed accounting functions metaphorically, it does appear to be somewhat concealed: backgrounded in the accounting conceptual framework.

The idea of latent metaphor is explored in this chapter. It is recognized that there are other understandings of metaphor that are not particularly appreciated in the accounting literature. And this is this chapter's aim. To explain that metaphors operate deeply, tacit, implicit, hidden even. It is argued that metaphors are deeply imbedded within the apparent literalness of accounting conceptual frameworks. and this that this is because metaphors are tied up with our fundamental embodied (immanent) experiences of or reciprocal interactions with the world. The thesis evidences a broader spectrum of vision in accounting conceptual framework, studied in more detail in chapter six of the thesis. This is the point of departure from other accounting literature that would see a certain freedom over language use/schemes applied in order to structure reality, and which presumes access to overt or obvious metaphorical use as productive for rhetoric or power.

Moreover, it is also argued that such submerged metaphors, such as *Vision as Knowledge*, are rudimentary, but implicitly dynamic, fluid, varied, conceptual metaphors of which its meaning would change. Its meaning change depends specifically on change in the collective experience of social reality, it is argued. Thus, if the metaphor is studied as a more deeply rooted metaphor for accounting standard setting, it may be reasonably expected to reveal difference in this metaphor. Vision is a metaphor that is threaded through all accounting discourse. That metaphor sits between the spectrum of the absolute literal, and the absolute metaphorical is important for the thesis' argument. It is also recognized from the literature that a philosophical type of knowing pertains to the rigidity of a supposedly literal, disembodied rationality, which may threaten to undermine vision's heterogeneity, and with it, the possibility of accounting knowledge's heterogeneity too.

In the previous chapter, the conceptual framework was discussed as an activity that attempts to describe the way the world is, a scientific corpus based on literal description of objects or events as literal concepts, categorizations or properties. By providing an accurate modelling system of financial reality, conceptual frameworks endorse the transmission of stable literal reference of its conceptual definitions. The thesis hopes also to illustrate the orientation that conceptual frameworks have taken (please refer to chapter 5).

All in all, conceptual frameworks have remained committed to a faithful representation ideal; one that conceals the depth to which the conceptual metaphor vision as knowledge descends. It is assumed that in the conceptual framework period studied there has been a gradual inability to conceptualize what goes in the financial world, hence a lack in the capturing under literal concepts. However, it is also recognized that accounting conceptual frameworks function as an ever-expanding body of knowledge that is tied intimately to the world, and seek to alter (evolve) conceptions of accounting knowledge within an assumed frame of a purely technical reasoning or a rigid know-how. A knowledge built on principles of scientific rationality that supports politically-economic interests.

For our methodology, an attempt is made to sidestep the many representationalist, Saussurian and continental philosophical, postmodern, socio-linguistic, hermeneutic or linguistic turns that the accounting literature has taken (please refer to chapter 2). This sidestepping is achieved somewhat by taking up a methodological stance in the popular science studies of those working in second generation cognitive science: Antonio Damasio, Eleanor Rosch, Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and for specifically for this thesis, the work of embodiment found in George Lakoff and Mark Johnson.

These authors have attempted to sidestep a certain dualism/binary way of thinking about the relation between vision, knowledge and objectivity. The older, Cartesian, metaphysical assumptions of disembodied visual knowing fosters the uptake of free will, and subjective manipulation of language that approach thinking to and about metaphor. That accounting *as a language* is metaphorical in the sense that that it is caught up in the wills and freedoms of subjects to change beliefs through a transformation of that language. This is not the thesis' position. The thesis views metaphors functioning in a different way, where metaphor unconsciously permeates language. And where metaphor is understood as an outcome of a deeper relationship between body and world, and not merely subject to manipulation by aware subjects who seek to have the world a certain way, to shape it through rhetorical or ideological pretext.

5.1 Side Stepping the Metaphorical/Literal Binary

The thesis sits between some of the realist, scientific, and anti-realist, anti-visual or anti-epistemological concerns that have targeted vision. This is in order to understand the deep, but evolving state of vision as a metaphor for knowledge in accounting conceptual frameworks. In other words, to consider the grey area between absolute vision (accurate, implied literalist, objectivist, scientific view) and absolute blindness (subjectivist, arbitrary, normative) polarity, it is argued that metaphor is part of our assumed literal language; subtle, conventional, part of unconscious thought, and thus deeply imbedded (Lakoff, and Johnson, 1980, 1999).

How the meaning of this conceptual metaphor *Vision as Knowledge* evolves over time between these two positions is hopefully drawn out in this chapter; between the absolutely objective literal description and extreme, subjective metaphorical free play.

Skepticism over *Vision as Knowledge* in accounting raises the bar for accounting failure (Macintosh et al, 2000, Macintosh, 2003). This is because accounting nourishes an image that connects a spurious all seeing, all knowing rationality; without including caveats or explanations in terms of why vision is the privileged source domain for knowledge.

The reason is that Vision is implied, culturally. Perception is literal because, without which, all that is left is mystification. In the hope for modernist certainty, for correct, objective truth, an all-or-nothing vision prevails. One that is associated with a disembodied, passive, and a-temporal viewing subject, whereby the world should be approached in this way - with distance and passive rationalism. It is presumed that this cannot be the sort of knowledge to which conceptual frameworks promise. Studies in embodiment and perception move against classic assumptions regarding disengaged cognition.

It appears that consistent evidence from the accounting literature critiques (negatively) this older type of metaphysical realism – this disengaged, scientific rationality. But in the literature's quest to disrupt a disembodied, an all-knowing gaze, it tends throw out other conceptions of vision (truth/reason) as a form of knowing entirely. As a way of drastically revolutionizing accounting, dismantling vision as a form of knowing, rejecting its complexity as a conceptual metaphor in accounting regulation, accounting research may inadvertently reveal accounting reporting to be inherently subjective and facile, lacking objectivity and empty of knowledge.

In this chapter, Lakoff and Johnson's theories on perception and embodiment (see Johnson and Lakoff, 2002) explains differences that arise from transitions which result in a move away from metaphysical, disembodied, monocular vision metaphors associated with the mind. The crux here, according to these experientially realist theorists, is that meaning derives from an ongoing *body*-world encounter, so meaning would evolve through a continual sensory interaction with the world. Meaning results from a *dynamic* inter-action between the body and his/her environment, so as to produce varied conceptualizations/metaphors/schemes. Consequently, conceptions of knowledge would alter. There would be other conceptions of *Vision as Objective Knowledge.* Other meanings other than a simply passive type of vision*,* that would evidence change in accounting conceptual frameworks.

The relationship between body and world, is, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999), ongoing. Bodies and world dynamically changing and altering across time and space (Clark, 1997). And this occurs through the way bodies interact with others, via sociality and shared experience. It is these interactions that influence the development and creation of new meaning(s) through the external world mediated through experience. This implies that vision metaphors of knowledge, those of mirroring, reflection, patriarchy, privileged control, and distance principally arises where the human body withdraws from activity and merely observes. This assumption is but one understanding of knowledge across time. That this goes largely unnoticed as a metaphor in the thinking of accounting conceptual frameworks. Vision is in part, it seems, a symptom of Western culture's intent, which is "dominated by an ocularcentric paradigm, a vision generated, vision-centered interpretation of knowledge, truth and reality" (Levin, 1993 p. 2). When subjects experience the world as fully present: as having fully visible features, felt dimensions and transparent qualities, this type of knowledge dominates as an image schematic concept, as "a recurring, dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programmes that gives coherence and structure to experience" (Johnson, 1987, p. 14). So that when these qualities are felt to disappear, or are not so explicitly obvious, a shift in the conception of knowledge occurs due to its lacking in experiential coupling with the world.

Therefore, Lakoff and Johnson provides a methodological framework for understanding not only meaning change in discourse, but a way to acknowledge the depth to which metaphors can go in their evolving development, the way in which the creation of new meaning is tied to the context/environment. Overall, it is the intention here to study these conceptual vision metaphors over time by analyzing the metaphoric evolution in non-deliberate metaphor use

(please refer section 5.4.2, p. 144). And a method is employed in order to study vision's metaphorical evolution, comparing the vision metaphor with its proto language equivalent (Ratzlaff, 2011). That is, the vision metaphor's ancestral root or morpheme provides evidence of the vision metaphor's relationship to an either an active or inactive physical body which is connected to the human body's presence metaphors, *Vision as Body* and *Vision as Mind* respectively which are linked to knowledge to a greater or lesser degree.

In order to see how conceptions of knowledge may alter, it is discovered that a good approach would be to study *non-deliberate* vision metaphors longitudinally. This is done using a software based analysis of conceptual frameworks as texts, which, would evince the varied conceptions of *Vision as Knowledge* in conceptual frameworks as a deeply submerged, but evolving metaphor in the accounting conceptual framework periodization. Conceptions of vision are submerged within these texts as everyday language use (non-obvious/overt metaphors) and hence the deployment of a software based corpus analysis is deployed in order to select vision metaphors in conceptual frameworks that have such a concealed or imbedded nature. In terms of method, this is deemed necessary because conceptual frameworks, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is a textual site demanding a linguistic analysis; the findings connected to this analysis appear in the next chapter.

5.1.1 CHAPTER STRUCTURE

- In the first part, an overview of Lakoff and Johnson's theory of embodied cognition, which explains that knowledge is embodied and is thereby linked to the body being *in* the world contextually. Thus, the social environment and natural environment is in constant flux, which therefore causes change in the meaning of things. Through changes in metaphorical interpretations in order to make sense out the world around us, conceptions of things, abstract things, might change.

- In the second part, the method for extracting vision metaphors is explained. What is explained are the submerged vision metaphor categories on which the thesis focuses. These are then explored over time in order to assess if change in the metaphor, *Vision as Knowledge*, and how it is explored for varied meaning development. The method is split into broadly three parts. First, a search for vision metaphors using an etymological analysis is used. Second, vision metaphors' Proto Indo-European Root is used to focus more closely on vision metaphors that suggest *how* deep knowledge is conceptualized in terms of vision in language. The way this is done is to assess

whether vision is either connected *less* with the body: a passive, indifferent gaze (inactive submerged vision metaphors) or is more along the lines of an active, mobile, type of vision (active submerged vision metaphors). The Indo-European root, the lexical meaning of the English language, that have verb-al meaning, such as run, walk, speak, hit, move, and so on. This morpheme (the smallest grammatical unit in a language) is used in order to find this inactivity (know, observe, exist) or activity (move, run, cut etc.) in the vision metaphor respectively. It is recognized that these submerged vision metaphors have either a strong (active vision) or weak (inactive vision) connection with the body, that reveals either a closer correspondence with epistemological realism in accounting policy making, or does not. It is suggested that the key conceptions of vision are connected to a strong conception of mirroring, and where more of the body exists, accounting knowledge is connected to a different conception of this metaphor.

- Thirdly, from the findings, the thesis attempts to understand how submerged, conceptual vision metaphors function; what it is that conceptual frameworks seem to be conveying through them, what are regulators communicating about the nature of objective knowledge today. The thesis therefore tries to theorize transition, in order to demonstrate that there are other types of vision, that might not be associated with the eye and mind. Overall, it is discovered that the variety in the meaning of the vision can give some justification for the use of theoretical framework, in chapter 2, in order to give meaning and shape to the understanding of vision to the reader.

5.1.2 PURPOSE AND UNDERLYING LOGIC OF THE CHAPTER

The chapter begins with an explanation of vision as value, free, objective knowledge as being a conceptual metaphor; and how it offers an opportunity to learn and explore the conceptual nuances of this metaphor throughout the conceptual framework period studied. In the next part, it is revealed how and what forms this conceptual metaphor takes. It is recognized that metaphors can appear in conceptual framework as readers/speakers are largely unaware of, and this is the tracing of the vision word's origin using the word's Proto indo European root. This is a practical method that is devised in order to look for how much activity of the human body.

The starting assumption was that *Vision as Knowledge* could be understood differently because it seems as if much focus has been paid to a specific understanding of this metaphor in terms of reflection, passive, and disengaged knowledge of some other. The purpose is to

show there are ways of exploring the nuances of this metaphor, and that there are developmental phases in the understanding of this metaphor.

5.1.3 IMPORTANCE OF METHODOLOGY: ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Lakoff and Johnson's embodied theory of the mind is important for the thesis' research question in a number of ways. Just to remind the reader, the thesis' basic research question is:

> Question 1: Are there differences in the type of categories of vision metaphors that appear in conceptual frameworks in the period from FASB 1978 to IASB 2015 Exposure Draft. What are these different types?

Thus, could accounting *Vision as Knowledge* be a transformative conceptual metaphor in accounting conceptual frameworks; where vision is knowledge is underpinned by a strong sense of implied literalism, scientism and objectivism? Firstly, by identifying vision metaphors, and categorizing them, it is assumed that the vision metaphor is underpinned by an evolutionary structure underlined by a philosophical tradition regarding vision and embodied cognition. From this, a second, further exploratory research question could be determined in order to understand through these classifications how this evolving state of vision metaphor occurs, which provides an understanding of the meaning of knowledge in accounting conceptual framework periods:

> Question 2: What is the evolution in the patterns/trends in these types of vision metaphors that appear in conceptual frameworks inform about the way conceptual frameworks conceptualize knowledge?

In this thesis Lakoff and Johnson's theory on metaphors and embodied cognition (see Lakoff, 1993), is used provide an explanation of meaning development in the conceptual metaphor, *Vision as Knowledge*. Crucially, Lakoff and Johnson's theorizing outlines that conception(s) of knowledge derive mainly from the position of the body in relation to objects or is contingent, and so can alter over time.

Just to note, the aim here is to explore vision metaphors and investigate what patterns or trends in these categories of vision metaphors exist; what conceptual frameworks impart about the conceptualization of visual knowledge in accounting conceptual frameworks, and how is it understood, does it have multiple meanings perhaps?

In particular, Lakoff and Johnson highlight that the body is always in an on-going, non-individuated interaction with its environment, always affecting on language and schemes in quite subtle and unexpected ways. And this relationship influences sense making, meaning making and conceptualization as on-going; always in a state of becoming something other. Such a methodological approach may therefore provide clues as to what the meanings of concepts that underpin accounting knowledge are, and how the meaning of these concepts is understood differently over time if analyzed.

Throughout this chapter, Lakoff and Johnson's thoughts on phenomenology, embodied realism and the role that situated bodies play in the production of meaning is explored. In their seminal work, *Metaphors We Live by* (1980)[102], and particularly in their later work *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999)[103], Lakoff and Johnson show how intellectual reasoning typically associates knowledge with a passive, idle body, where the visual experience is literally away from worlds: bodies far away from the world as a deeply rooted conceptual metaphor where reading, theorizing and writing is involved. Because the body withdraws from activity and simply looks, knowledge is understood in terms of embedded metaphors of vision that is knowledge, conceptualized as a privileged passive possession of sight at a distance that reflects. This type of experiential concept comes to shape more abstract experiences, so that there is a conceptual correspondence between one experiential domain with another:

"Most concepts are partially understood in terms of other concepts."

(Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 56)

Thus, Lakoff and Johnson show how a conceptual metaphor *Vision is Knowledge* derives from a broader conceptual metaphor*: The Body is Mind*. These authors explain how an intrinsic bodily experience, such as visual experience, shapes another, more abstract, experience, that of knowledge, without any awareness of the metaphor's deeper presence,

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[102] In the preface to "Metaphors We Live By " (1980), they write: "The book grew out of a concern, on both parts, with how people understand their language and their experience. When we first met in 1979, we found that we shared, also, a sense that the dominant views on meaning in Western Philosophy and Linguistics – that "meaning" in these traditions has very little to do with what people find meaningful in their lives."

[103] In Lakoff and Johnson's *Phenomenology In the Flesh* (1999, p.98), they cite Varela, Thomson and Rosch also draw on the cognitive science explain: "First, that cognition depends upon the kinds of experience that come from having a body with various sensorimotor capacities, and second, that these individual sensorimotor capacities are themselves embedded in a more encompassing biological, psychological, and cultural context" (1991, 173)

because of its recurrence. What results from the body's distant perceptual interaction with objects of experience is the following metaphor (distinguished by capital letters):

VISION is OBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

Thus, a central claim of Lakoff and Johnson's work has been used to show how metaphors arise because of an inextricable body-world engagement, and are causally determined. And since vision is normally bound up with the experienced inactivity of body, giving primacy to the intellectual activity of the mind over the more physical body, this conceptual metaphor, *VISION is OBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE*, arises from a body-world engagement. This metaphor evidences the role that the body plays, primarily inactive, in the production of the meaning of objective knowledge. According to Lakoff and Johnson, the body, experienced or non-experienced, in ongoing interaction with the world around it. This is hidden in the conceptual metaphors of thought. It is central to thought but goes largely unnoticed in language. Crucially, this metaphor is ongoing in meaning production due to this interactivity:

> "Meaning comes, not from just internal structures of the organism (the 'subject') nor solely from external inputs (the 'objects') but rather from recurring patterns of *engagement between organism and environment*."
>
> (Johnson and Lakoff, 2002, p. 248, *emphasis added*)

Lakoff and Johnson maintain that subjects experience vision as disembodied knowledge. This is simply because of the way human beings *experience* the inactivity of their physical bodies when gathering knowledge. And that that conception is deeply entrenched in language. This is mainly because of the way our ocular system works. When we passively observe an object, for example, we do not fully experience the working of our bodies, physically[104]. The physical body, is mostly idle. And, seeing, the perceiving of things, *feels*, separate, from the body. That is, knowledge *feels* disembodied.

Over time, society begins to understand that true knowledge is associated with passive viewing, gazing and observing features. And this is because more information is taken in through the eyes (Sweetser, 1990) that connects to the logical intellect via experience (verification). Therefore, vision is then taken for granted as the associated metaphor for the experiential intellect, because of the situated-ness of the body in relation to objects. In other words, the subject, sitting in some isolated space, mostly sedentary, reading texts and

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[104] The neurons in our brain fire or, the cortex or retina functions, but are not fully experienced; they are backgrounded.

writing, begins to form conclusions that the world is structured like a text, and that by changing texts, one can change the world through altering beliefs.

The power of epistemological realism in accounting thought - this metaphor of mind-mirroring a mind-independent world - is predicated on mostly an idle body, relative to the observable world. The mind, intellect and the eye is privileged; whereas the physical body, it is assumed, provides little benefit to cognition.

Because the eyes simply *receive* reflections and refractions from objects, viewers simply associate knowledge with visual perception, almost without acknowledging that this is indeed a veiled metaphor. And for knowledge to occur, a gap must be maintained between knowing subject (outside the space looking inwards) and known object (inside the space, to be gazed at). Distance must be achieved, conceptually but metaphorically, in order to fully know that object.

However, there is never disembodiment. Only the body interacting with the environment in that distant, observable moment, producing the type of meanings that situation generates. From this situated-ness of the body in space relative to other phenomena, embodied realism suggests the possibility of a continuous relation with meaning change *in response* to world:

> "Embodied realism, as we understand it, is the view that the locus of experience, meaning and thought is the ongoing series of embodied organism-environment interactions that constitute our understanding of the world. According to this view, there is no ultimate separation of mind and body, and we are always "in touch" with our world through our embodied acts and experiences."

> (Johnson and Lakoff, 2002, p. 249)

Thus, according to Lakoff and Johnson, human beings are rather, part of, and situated within the world, and cannot radically escape to an impossible viewing position to radically see and then seek to re-alter the current state of affairs with mere language. Subjects are never, so to speak, separated from the world. And therefore, should not assume superiority by taking up such a privileged position to objects that assume providence over those objects.

5.2 PRIMACY OF THE BODY

Lakoff and Johnson presume that there is no superior relation to any other inanimate object that would suggests a freedom to control them. According to both authors, to get away from the world, to obtain new descriptions of it, by taking up some impossible omniscient "God's

eye view" (Putnam, 1981, p. 164), is not possible. On the contrary, embodied cognition starts with the human body (e.g. physiology or morphology) first, then moves to mind; not the converse.

> " [Embodied cognition] sees all our higher-level functioning as growing out of and shaped by our abilities to perceive things, manipulate objects, move our bodies in space, and evaluate our situation. Its principle of continuity is that the "higher" develops from the "lower."
>
> (Johnson, 2007, p.11, *Parenthesis included*)

Any attempt to transcend human experience and interact with that his/her environment outside of *a* body, outside of the intrinsic sensory apparatus of human beings, any insinuation of a subject-object gap, can lead to quite high and erroneous expectations about human reasoning and knowledge. The body is fully immersed into the world. The ongoing interaction with the environment of which the body forms an inherent part in human reasoning:

> "Our 'body' and 'mind' are dimensions of the primordial, ongoing organism-environment transactions that are the locus of who and what we are. Consequently, there is no mind entity to serve as the locus of reason."
>
> (Johnson, 2007, p. 13)

Therefore, second generation cognitive science places the human body as a central component in cognition, and subconsciously a functional metaphor in the knowledge production process. It is not simply the case of a mind mirroring or building representations. The body is primarily (and this includes the human eye) above the mind. The crux is that the mind is important, but minimal in cognition. There is a continuous, dynamic interaction between *bodies* (whole body) and world. This interaction influences thought[105]. The mind does not merely represent or mirror the world in this interaction. Rather, the world rather

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[105] "New feelings that hit the sensory system, causing re-thought. And most importantly, not to think, but just to *act* in accordance with what is already present to experience. Acting, doing, repeating, instead of reflecting, believing and thinking, might be the reason we do not produce new metaphors: "As cultural values change, so will the metaphors that represent those aspects of experience also change. Pervasive in scientific language, metaphors tend to highlight certain cultural values that we experience collectively" (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 160).

dynamically interacts with the body, that impacts on the cognitive processes that come to generate the kind of taken for granted metaphors of knowledge.

This is the reason why seeing becomes the basis of objective knowledge in Western societies. Because Western societies privilege scholarly book learning/theorizing over the more hands-on labor of a manual worker, seeing *feels* like true knowledge, associated with the more preferred academic, book learning of specialized professionals. Hardening into truths, facts, and knowledge, vision then supports an ontology wherein subjects assume conceptually metaphorically that the world is orderable, mechanical and constructed all the way down, and it can also be literally "deconstructed" and dismantled, too. Subjects effectively downcast their eyes (Jay, 1994, p. 27), effectively an "inner eye of the mind" (legislating over the world's content) not the eye that operates. The subject effectively believes they are in a position of irreversible control.

Therefore, according to Lakoff and Johnson, and others such as Antonio Damasio (1994, 1999), a *subject – object* gap is no longer an appropriate way to think about knowledge attainment. Crucially, there is a shifting conception of what knowledge is, and how it is tied to context or lived-world:

<u>From a disembodied to embodied mind</u>

Rational - Situated

Abstract - De-centralized

Culture Free - Culture-Dependent

Ahistorical - Contextualized

Unemotional - Biologically Principled

Asocial - Social

Disembodied - Embodied

(Nunez and Freeman, 2000, p. 55)

What embodied cognition shows is that a human, subjective, lived, situated body, not *influenced* by contexts, people, and environments, is not possible. Since we cannot take some impossible God's eye view of the object (outside of the lived, sensing body), humans must assume they have an embodied and situated knowledge of their worlds. They rather represent

through their biological sensory perceptions through physiological structure. The properties they inherently possess, and share, influence knowledge.

Thus, the mind is, what Lakoff and Johnson call, embodied:

> "Not disembodied algorithmic processes like a computer program, but are instead constituted and constrained by the kinds of organization reflected in the biological, anatomical, bio-chemical, and neurophysiological characteristics of the body and brain."
>
> (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 3)

Overall, appeal to transcendental reason (hierarchy of mind over body and other objects) is also a type of disembodied rationality. This is a rationality that derives from the experience of distance (the faraway-ness) in visual perception.

Yet it is a reasoning that forgets the process by which subjective, embodied assertions about the world is obtained. That is, knowledge and objectivity ignore the role the body (not just the mind) plays in the shaping and development of meaning, which plays out at a deeper level, below the surface of discourse. The body relates to the world through the human biologically sensing apparatus that generates new meanings. Consequently, our meanings rely on,

> "The kinds of bodies we have, the kinds of environments we inhabit, and the symbolic systems we inherit, which are themselves grounded in our embodiment."
>
> (Johnson, 1987, p, 207).

Thus, Lakoff and Johnson's thinking on "embodied realism/cognition" reveals how an ongoing interaction between body and world also conflates vision (embodied experience) with disembodied reasoning. It conflates vision with that of epistemological and metaphysical realism through the experience of literal distance (an office space, for example, coupled with a seated position). Absolute forms of knowledge and objectivity are conceptualized in terms of culturally imbedded vision metaphors where the body experiences (sensory-perceptual experience). This is especially strong when the body experiences the world phenomenologically as, solid, tangible, available, concrete, manifest, fully present and having clear visible boundaries and dimensions. What is true knowledge *is* vision. The privileged sensory capacity from which we derive most knowledge depends on the body and its visual, sensory relationship to objective phenomena.

In summary, western knowledge favors a passive, armchair, spectatorship typology of by-standing, empirical vision. Knowledge derives from representations within the staging mind, from a passive body that operates as a receiver of objective information. Yet according to Lakoff and Johnson, the body, in an ongoing interaction with the environment, plays a central role in the embodied (vision, touch, hearing) meanings that are given to knowledge. Thus, vision, as a metaphor, *becomes* knowledge in relation to our lived experiences[106]; the way in which the lifeworld perhaps is experienced is buried within our conceptual schemes, our metaphors. It has no connection, with control, free will, but more to do with interconnectedness and reciprocity. They are outcomes of a deeper connection with the world.

5.3 CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR: VISION IS KNOWLEDGE

"We are physical beings, bounded and set off from the rest of the world by the surface of our skins, and we experience the rest of the world as outside us. Each of us is a container with a bounding surface, an in-out orientation. We project our own in-out orientation into other physical objects…but we also…impose this orientation on our natural environment."

(Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p.29)

Another important idea behind conceptual metaphor methodology, therefore, is that inter-subjective and anti-representational (not from building mirror images in the mind of a pre-existing reality) accounts of meaning, is, at the foundation of thought and language. Praxis, interaction, activity, human agency, sensory capacity, language, communication et al, all of these require the human body to know things, and, therefore, for things to be known. Accordingly, meaning derives from the very bodily human experiences (see Lakoff, 1987, p. 267) that we have and therefore share. And this is because we are part of the world and actively engaged and immersed within it. According to Lakoff and Johnson, vision (the body) courses through the languages we use, which is metaphorically structured and deeply connected to the experiential body.

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[106] Some are merely banal/unconscious. Since we conceive of the world as different in certain historical moments (our world changes), the old ones will eventually appear out of kilter with our new occasions of experience. Regardless of what we believe today, in the next 100 years or so ideas and ways of understanding will have altered drastically due to the body and environment nexus. That is, "metaphors are pervasive in everyday life" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p.3).

Therefore, there is a body metaphor, vision, treated somewhat as a disembodied concept (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 76). Vision inheres deeply within the language we use when talking about *knowledge* (Sweetser, 1990). Lakoff and Johnson explain that inter-subjective sharing is possible because we share genetically, almost, identical bodies and, to an extent, world. And this is achievable through human subjects "*experiencing*"[107] their own physical bodies: bodies that are engaging functionally with their worlds dynamically. The traits those bodies share (vision) influence how we conceptualize that world: through encountering our environments with innate sensory capacities that we have or in some cases do not have.

This view conveys that without certain bodily characteristics are significant. Sight, coupled with experience[108] of shared environments, has a significant part to play in epistemology. Without possessing the evolutionary marvel of sight, for example, would there be something different about the way in which human beings experience their world and the concepts of transparency, cloudiness, garishness, opacity that they derive. These metaphors appear to influence how we talk about knowledge, without acknowledging on some level that they are metaphors of vision, based on the changes within the established knowledge communities. The traditional cognitive science propagation of rationalism over experiential empiricism is one (Evans and Green, 2006, p. 44). And there are cultural differences too. Different cultures make use of different senses, and come to very different epistemological conclusions, where vision is not entirely the dominant source domain for knowledge[109].

The dominant epistemology derives from the impact our environments have *on* our sensing bodies based on some form of functional relation to the world inhabited. For example, as the social anthropologist Alfred Gell (1999) explains that tribes from New Guinea, draw very different embodied inferences about the world around them. These tribes use auditory, rather than visual cues from their environments. Because survival depends on listening, their knowledge derives from the felt experience of survival, which relies more so on the ear, than the eye:

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[107] Experience is stated here because we do not fully experience what our bodies are really like: body dysmorphia could be an example.

[108] "Experience" here, according to Lakoff is broad. It is "the totality of human experience and everything that plays a role in it – the nature of our bodies, our genetically inherited capacities, our modes of functioning in the world, our social organizations, etc." (Lakoff, 1987, p. 266)

[109] Koller and Semino (2009) for example have suggested that gender differences between political leaders do not generally signify that a female leader will use "feminine" metaphors. They explained: "contextual factors play a central role in what image speakers wish to create and what strategies they employ to do so" (p. 9). And this is an acknowledgment of the powerful role of the conceptualizing role of the human body in constant interaction with its environment. And how comes through body metaphors dependent on the way a body adapts to environmental stimuli.

"In the New Guinea forest habitat [dense, unbroken jungle] hearing is relatively dominant (over vision) as the sensory modality for coding the environment as a whole… Umeda, and languages like Umeda, are phonologically iconic, because they evoke a reality which is itself 'heard' and imagined in the auditory code, whereas languages like English are non-iconic because they evoke a reality which is 'seen' and imagined in the visual code."

(Gell, 1999, p. 247-8, 1999)

Thus, how a culture obtains knowledge about its world depends on its lived space/lifeworld inter-actions; between the body and the environment with which the body has to condition itself to cope. That there are inter-subjective relations at the level of a person's individual experiences shows that subjects make sense of that lifeworld metaphorically via human concepts, and from which, interactions enable individuals to understand each and make sense of out of what the other means[110].

"The shared intersubjective space in which we live since birth enables and bootstraps the constitution of the sense of identity we normally entertain with others. When observing other acting individuals, and facing their full range of expressive power (the way they act, the emotions and feelings they display), a meaningful embodied interpersonal link is automatically established."

(Gallese, 2009, p. 520)

That is, understanding, knowledge or sense-making exists at a more at a very basic, instinctual, embodied level:

"Share the meaning of actions, intentions, feelings, and emotions with others, thus grounding our identification with and connectedness to others."

(Gallese, 2009, p. 520).

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[110] For instance, Lakoff and Johnson explain that psychologists have explored the way mirror neurons function, that support claims that when we see another performing a task or when we attempt to learn a new skill or feel empathy for another person, our mirror neurons are firing so intensely in these moments, that we come to share, with another person, a similar, experience of the other (Gallesse and Lakoff, 2005). See also Gallese (2009).

Embodied cognition thus opposes a completely essentialist account of the world,[111] where the mind is treated as a disembodied, computational concept. That is,

> "Those who were educated to assume a view tend to reject out of hand either (1) the existence of metaphorical concepts or (2) the imposition and definition of rational structure by the body or brain."
>
> (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 74).

Thus, embodied realism is not merely a part of the postmodern or linguistic turn either. It is,

> "(a) a commitment to the existence of a real world, (b) a recognition that reality places constraints on concepts, (c) a conception of truth that goes beyond mere internal coherence, and (d) a commitment to the existence of stable knowledge of the world."
>
> (Johnson, 1987, p. xv)

And embodied realism helps us make new meanings as the environment alters. That the body evolves, and the mind alters as a consequence (Clark 1997, 2003). And with it, an implicit challenge to the universality of concepts results. That is, the body-mind-environment interaction can reveal differences that were not previously thought possible a priori[112]. That within a system of shared communication, what becomes meaningful to subjects, and what is not considered meaningful, is predicated on their body-world experiences. And this, they argue, is due to the cultural, and shared, intersubjective relationships. That there is an on-going interaction between experiential body, mind and world[113].

That concepts of knowledge and objectivity through a body-world interaction arises is critical in understanding how the thesis thinks about change in conceptual frameworks. This is not through disengagement from the body and environment through the mind's attempt to

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[111]"Indeed, neuroscientific evidence is now accumulating that experience-dependent brain activity in particular environmental contexts play a role in the development of the individual brain…the brain appears to be an organ that constructs itself in the development through spontaneously generated and experience-dependent activity" (Thomson, 2007 p. 408)

[112] The world has to be factored in; in the sense that the material world around us is required for cognition to take shape. That is, we use the world of which we are part to gain cognition. "The cyborg is a potent cultural icon of the late twentieth. It conjures up images of human-machine hybrids ad the physical merging of flesh and electronic circuitry…For what is special about human brains, and what best explains the distinctive features of human intelligence is precisely their ability to enter into deep and complex relationships with non-biological constructs, props and aids" (Clark, 2003, p. 5)

[113] "In phenomenological terms, this power of culture and language to shape human subjectivity and experience belongs not simply to the genetic constitution of the individual, but to the generative constitution of the inter-subjective community. Individual subjectivity is from the outset inter-subjectivity, as a result of the communally handed down norms, conventions, symbolic artifacts, and cultural traditions in which the individual is already embedded" (Thompson, 2007, p. 409)

build models, built on precepts of first generation cognitive science. The latter implies that the brain is given primacy in the gaining of knowledge, more than the holistic, physical body that connects up with brain via its neuro-circuitry. No knowledge takes precedence where knowledges are situated (species-specific), since the brain is connected to the body; that the brain lives in the body, and the body with its human conceptual structure is coupled to the world.

Following on from this the next section attention now turns specifically to the conceptual metaphor of vision: Vision is Objective, value-free Knowledge. The particular focus is on how vision is normally associated with an almost sedentary body; and less associated with an active, embodied subject. In the former, the body normally withdraws from physical activity, simply observing what goes on. The body effectively distances from the other. Rather associated with gazing, viewing and speculating on objects at a distance, knowledge is about receiving the inherent features that the object/event has. As if it were viewed from above, the object is inert, subject to mirroring in language. This, it is suggested here, has become an established source domain, a metaphor, for knowledge, which is explored and analyzed in some detail in the next section[114].

5.3.1 VISION AS PASSIVE KNOWING

> "The Knowing is Seeing metaphor is so firmly rooted in the role of vision in human knowing and is so central to our conceptions of knowledge that we are seldom aware of the way it works powerfully to structure our sense of what it is to know something. It is the commonality and experiential grounding of this ubiquitous metaphor that makes it an ideal candidate for sophisticated philosophical elaboration in a wide variety of theories and knowledge."

(Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 394)

Lakoff and Johnson even map Descartes' thinking as a *Vision is Objective Knowledge* conceptual metaphor (Please refer to table 5.1 on the top of the next page).

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[114] Sweetser (1990, p. 38) explains why this vision is a metaphor for knowledge. (a) human sight has the ability to focus (b) Vision is out primary source of 'objective' data about the world, which is understood to be obtained from a distance and (c) Vision is the same regardless of who is doing the looking, as long as he/she is sharing the same perspective.

Visual Domain	Knowledge Domain
Object Seen	Idea
Seeing an Object Clearly	Knowing an Idea
Person who sees	Person who knows
Light	"Light" of Reason Visual Focussing
Visual Acuity	Mental Acuity
Physical Viewpoint	Mental Viewpoint
Visual Obstruction	Impediment to Knowing

Table 5.1 Vision as Knowledge (Source: Lakoff and Johnson (1999) p. 393 – 394)

It is therefore the case that, as children, we construct "cognitive categories, relations, analogies, and metaphors" through linguistic communication (Thomson, 2007, p. 408). Concrete, embodied experiences (source domain) become mapped onto a more abstract domain of experience (target domain). In this case, *vision* becomes an experiential source domain for a more abstract target domain, *knowledge*. Therefore,

> "One shouldn't get the idea that "metaphor" here is a mere figure of speech used by poets or politicians to illustrate an idea for aesthetic or manipulative purposes (respectively)…They [conceptual metaphors] are not arbitrary because they are motivated (in general) by our bodily grounded experience, which is biologically constrained."

> (Nunez, in Nunez and Freeman, 1999 p. 45)

That is, metaphors impart something about the way human subjects conceptualize knowledge, via experiences of vision. And this is through (a) possessing a biological body and (b) the way the world has been arranged. Therefore, knowledge means different things according to different experiences from the sensory capacity of the body and from differently arranged worlds.

As mentioned previously, post-modernism has denigrated Vision as knowledge as a sort of scientific, passive rationalist perspective (Jay, 1994). And this is because subjects experience the world (reality) differently in this period via a function of human embodiment in the world.

> "The concepts we have access to and the nature of the reality we think and talk about are a function of our embodiment: we can only talk about what we can perceive and conceive, and the things that we can perceive and conceive derived from embodied experience"

(Evans and Green, 2006, p. 46)

It follows that the social world appears not so straightforward. Making knowledge or any claims to have absolute knowledge becomes difficult is not so ontologically certain times. Society cannot cling to the metanarrative identities of the past. And this arises not only because society *will* it to be. But because there are shared human experiences of this world that suggest there are increasing difficulties in seeing what *is* there (form gives over to formlessness) and on which reality (an ontological politics, of sort) to converge collective thought[115]. Hence, the social scientist who approaches the world in an objectively visual way might find it difficult to form an image of the world through sight alone, requiring the thoughts and experiences of others. In an increasingly complex postmodern environment, which tends to overcomplicate than simplify, the conceptual metaphor *Vision as Knowledge* as tied to concepts of passivity, distance, indifference and presumed computational, mental prowess*, as argued previously,* becomes slowly and inexorably difficult to maintain.

Even though according to Lakoff and Johnson sight metaphors have become a much exalted and privileged source domain for knowledge, there is a sense that vision would not be a suitable source domain candidate for knowledge today, at least not in terms of control through indifference, passivity and rational objectivism. This metaphor of vision is usually associated with epistemological realism in this respect, centered around Cartesian dualism. This view, as argued in the literature review chapter, has been challenged and denigrated by the findings of second generation cognitive science (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, p. 89).

The kind of idle, call it armchair, intellectual speculation about objects has been placed in quarantine, and not through subjective will, whim or predilection. Thus, relying more on different conceptions, different understandings, different narratives becomes pathologic to the point of anxious in socially constructing the world via language. Even though Lakoff acknowledges that there is never, "one true and complete description of 'the way the world is." (Lakoff, 1987, p. 260), this does not mean a rejection of world, since it commits to the

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[115] It could be argued that ontological politics decides which reality to support. Should we support indigenous people's reality to protect their lived space or should we support the reality of oil companies in their quest to install pipelines.

existence of real things external to human beings. The experience of seeing *things* has a deeply connected role to the way our meanings of knowledge and objectivity generally evolve. Thus, *Vision as Objective Knowledge* is a primary, conceptual metaphor is not difficult to recast if thought in terms of influence from an imposing world. And this is because it is based on our primary spatial/lived relationship with the world of which we are part. It is as, Lakoff, describes, a form of "basic realism" (Lakoff, 1987, p. 158).

5.3.2 THE SEDENTARY BODY AND VISION

The basic assumption here is that Vision connects with "the objective and intellectual mental domain" (Sweetser, 1990, p. 37). And so, the attainment of pure knowledge must come from the less than physical application of the body. With more emphasis placed on the vision, the intellect, mind over body, is the main source of knowledge. Vision, thus, connects strongly with mental acuity and a de-contextualized objective knowledge. Consequently, Vision becomes a significant metaphor for how human subjects are assumed to gain theoretical knowledge about conditions, objects and events. In this state, the body is solitary, sedentary, passive, and receiving of information from an objective reality.

As previously put forward, western traditions of a sovereign, scholarly subject conflates knowledge with an absent body (Leder, 1990). And is crucial in terms of how culturally vision dominates[116]. And therefore, associating the inactive body with the attainment of true knowledge[117]:

> "The vision/intellection metaphor is thoroughly alive today and highly structured…Thus, just as a physical object may be opaque or transparent (impedes vision or not, accordingly, likewise an argument or a proposition may be 'crystal clear,' 'opaque,' 'transparent,' 'muddy', or 'murky' to our mental vision."
>
> (Sweetser, 1990, p. 39 – 40)

Thus, vision, experienced as disembodied, is the "primary source of objective data about the world", (Sweetser, 1990, p. 39). As Gibbs points out:

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[116] Because Lakoff and Johnson argue that we share embodied basic level concepts, we indeed share something (shared spaces and shared bodies).

[117] "Lakoff and Johnson's claim that the high degree of similarity among all being places a strong constraint on the formation of metaphor is no doubt correct, and many metaphors may indeed be universal. Yet, there also may be significant cultural variation even in the body-based concepts and in the metaphors they motivate" (Pathak, 2013, p. 94)

"In particular, we conceptualize and talk about intellectual activities in terms of vision (i.e. Understanding is Seeing) and this partially motivates why we talk about understanding or knowing in terms of seeing things."

(Gibbs, 1994, p. 158)

This means that we understand the world (context) in terms of our species related experientially based concepts[118]. Which is either subjective, where we use more of the body or objective, where we use less of body, which is what occurs in vision and emphasis on book learning.

"Our everyday cognition is, at least partially, metaphorically structured…helps explain how the related senses of…*see, point,* and *look*, come to acquire the meanings they do over time."

(Gibbs, 1994 p. 158).

Metaphors are normally based on basic level human experiences of the object world as visual-spatial linked to Gestalt psychology[119]: big, small, close, far, above, below, deep, shallow, concrete, heavy and so on. And if we find that abstract concepts difficult to understand, these can be made meaningful through the use of bodily experiences to make the abstract understandable. And so, the concept (knowledge) may be mapped onto a more basic experiential category (vision) because knowledge feels visual, hence the extension of basic visual perception in microscopic or telescopic exploratory technologies.

Vision, as a source domain for knowledge, reveals the space-body relation in meaning making. When the body adopts a spatial relation (sitting standing back, observing), the meaning of concepts develops out of such a body-world engagement. Hence, concepts concerning metaphysical and epistemological realism, to some extent, depend on the way the body interacts (inactively) with its environment (sitting, reading, and writing):

"Basic level categorization tells us why metaphysical realism makes sense for so many people, where it seems to work and where is goes wrong. Metaphysical realism

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[118] Ray Gibbs identifies: "When people physically engage in certain activities, this can also lead them to adopt metaphorical concepts that influence their social judgments. Having people hold warm, as opposed to cold, cups of coffee, for a few minutes led to subsequently judge another person's interpersonal traits as being warmer, a finding that is consistent with the primary metaphor AFFECTION is WARMTH." (Gibbs, 2017, p. 229). See also Gibbs and Cameron (2008). Gibbs (1998).

[119] Gestalt psychology involves the construction of wholes or gestalts from incomplete perceptual information.

seems to work primarily at the basic level. If you look only at examples of basic level categories, at the level of category where we interact optimally with the world, then it appears as if our conceptual categories fit the world…It is not surprising, therefore, that philosophical discussions about the relationship between our categories and things tend to use basic level examples."

(Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 29)[120]

Therefore, the appearance or non-appearance of the body can appear in degrees. Metaphors, at least novel, creative, or poetic ones, appear to render the texts in some sense *subjective* because they lie outside the realm of our conceptions of objective, literal language. More precisely this is because they manifest *more of the body (*more emotion and less intellect*)* than *less of the* body (greater intellectual rationality):

"Why might find novel metaphor communicate more emotional intensity than conventional metaphor? One argument for the superior ability of metaphor, in general as a means of conveying emotion is that metaphor arises from embodied experience. The expression 'I total exploded' involves the entire body and implies action, whereas saying I got really angry describe the emotional experience in a more abstract, less embodied way."

(Gibbs, Legit and Turner, in Fussell, 2002, p. 137)

Despite the high visual relevance of creative metaphors, literal language retains a visual metaphoric dimension, often considered related to regularity within a language game:

"Essentially any constituent of an established or re-iterative pattern (word-action-object), whereupon, 'literal words are simply those that occupy an established position in a language game that is repeated with some kind of regularity', so that, eventually those words 'feel right' and, 'seem to reflect the world.'"

(Gergen, 1990, p. 270).

Thus, Lakoff and Johnson's embodied theory of metaphor bridges a gap. A gap between a view of metaphor that metaphors are futile at reflecting objects in the world (the mind as a

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[120] As Haser (2005) explains that we at least share basic level concepts (dogs, trees for example). And this is through a practical everyday association with objects that we share: "certain concepts should be assumed to be basic level concepts across individuals and cultures" (Haser, 2005, p. 133).

mirror of a pre-structured world) and the alternative suggestion that tropes help in conceptualizing or making sense out of our experienced worlds.

Embodied cognition, as expressed in Varela, Thompson and Rosch's *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (1991) is an alternative to the latter objectivist definition of cognition as, "the representation of a world that is independent of our perceptual and cognitive capacities by a cognitive system that exists independent of the world" (1991, p.20). Metaphor, therefore, brings us closer to the core of the ontological problem: the representation of such an independent yet rather nebulous outside world. What is revealed through embodied cognition is the importance of the interaction between mind (less of the mind), body (more of the body) and environment (more of the environment) in causally influencing cognition and sense making/knowledge.

Overall, it is presumed that vision (the body) is an imbedded, cultural metaphor for what knowledge really is. And, with Lakoff and Johnson's analytical model, it is observed how metaphor, the vision metaphor, depends on variations in the body-world interactivity. True vision is considered an inactive bodily activity, and is a source domain for knowledge. This occurs more when we sit at a desk or in an office, deep in thought. Where the body comes through in the language we utter, and the thought processes we have and share with others. Thus, the active body (feeling, emotion, running, doing, performing, playing sports) is associated with subjectivity. And this is because we do not usually run, perform or dance in our office spaces. Thus, we come to associate inactivity, sitting, thinking and looking, more with objectivity, and true knowledge. This is because we utilize less of the body (objective) or more of the body (subjective) in relation to gaining privileged knowledge of an object world. And when it is recognized that sight is important for a kind of dis-embodied, objective knowledge to be had, then this is the type of knowledge that gets us from A (seeing) to B (full knowledge).

> "Physical sight = Knowledge, intellection. This metaphor has its basis in vision's primary status as a source of data; not only does English have expressions like "I saw it with my own eyes" to indicate certainty, but studies of evidentials in many language show that direct visual data is considered to be the most certain kind of knowledge"
>
> (Sweetser, 1990, p. 33)

Vision is correlated with a faith in "fixed essence over "transitory appearances":

"Because vision tends towards static representation rather than the more dynamic structuring of hearing and touch, it emphasizes static being over dynamic becoming and fixed essence over transitory appearances."

(McMahan, 2002, p. 58)

And if this dynamic relation shifts, meaning shifts too from the sensory coupling of human and environment. Metaphors of knowledge: vision, mirroring, reflection and distal speculation of a changeless world become obsolete metaphors. They are incongruous, failing to fit experiences of our lived world. This is the world in which vision, mind, and intellect is *becoming* less likely in order to yield the type of knowledge and objectivity.

In this next section, two types of metaphors were explored. It is shown here how pervasive and significant for the thesis's novelty; how deeply embedded vision metaphors are in the language of accounting conceptual frameworks. What is discussed in the next section is how broad a metaphor vision is (as both overt and submerged metaphors), which, it is felt, expands and develops my own thinking about metaphor, not only as a good way of making a point or speaking rhetorically, but operating within the context of apparently, objective language of accounting regulatory language.

5.4 TWO TYPES OF VISION METAPHOR: DELIBERATE AND SUBMERGED METAPHOR

According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors can be characterized as either conventional (roughly conceptual/submerged/non-deliberate metaphor) or novel (alive, easily detectable, poetic and deliberate). It is recognized that metaphors become more acceptable and literal for a community of speakers over time – that they are conceptual. Below it can be revealed the different ways language scholars split metaphor into two categories: *conventional/submerged* and *creative/deliberate* metaphors. On the top of the next page, the reader can see the common division between alive and dead metaphors as represented by various authors (Table 5.2). The thesis takes the view that these metaphors can be usefully divided into deliberate and submerged categories, as shown through Table 5.3.

Authors	Terms corresponding to "conventional" metaphor	Terms corresponding to "novel metaphor"
Davidson (1979)	Dead Metaphor	Living Metaphor
Lakoff & Johnson (1980)	Literal Metaphor	Imaginative Metaphor
Kittay (1987)	Dead Metaphor	Novel Metaphor
Black (1993)	Weak Metaphor	Strong Metaphor
Gibbs (1994)	Dead Metaphor	Novel Metaphor
Cameron (2003)	Linguistic Metaphor	Process Metaphor

Table 5.2 Conventional/Novel metaphors (Denroche, 2015, p. 31)

(1) Deliberate Metaphors   "In the middle of life's road, I found myself in a dark wood"   Dante's Divine Comedy: In Lakoff (1993, p. 227)
(2) Submerged Metaphors   "I see what you mean"   "That's a clear argument".   "What's your outlook on this project?"   "Looks different from my point of view"   (Gibbs, (1998), cited in *The Fight over Metaphor in Thought and Language*, in Figurative Language and Thought, Katz, et al 1998, p. 96)

Table 5.3 Deliberate and Submerged vision metaphors

Nonetheless, in both cases (submerged and deliberate), we have the same conceptual metaphor with the same domains:

VISION (BODY DOMAIN) is KNOWLEDGE (ABSTRACT DOMAIN)

Each of these will now be explained in the following sections. But first it shall be explained what deliberate metaphors are, and second, what non-deliberate or submerged metaphors are.

5.4.1 DELIBERATE VISION METAPHORS

Novel or deliberate metaphors are mainly poetic, found in poetry and literature. They are creative, new, and imaginative in nature. They are also normally absent from types of legalistic or formal language. Yet they are arguably extensions of more basic embedded, non-deliberate, embodied metaphors. For example, *Vision as Objective Knowledge* is perhaps more creatively used in the Dante example above where darkness leads to doubt. Whereas the everyday examples of Gibbs, *Vision is Knowledge,* is used in a more conventional, everyday sense, where thereafter apparent metaphoricity disappears entirely. In some way, the conceptual metaphor *Vision as Knowledge* is needed in order to understand the more creative, imaginative metaphor (Yu, 1998, p. 29), but the non-deliberate metaphor, such as "I see what you mean" is unnoticeable as a metaphor.

There is also a kind of metaphor for metaphors themselves. Overt/Novel metaphors could be seen to *float* on the surface of discourse, whereas submerged ones are deep within the discourse as unfathomable, sunk metaphors. Alice Deignan writes in her introduction to Metaphor and Corpus Linguistics (2005, p. 3) that this is how metaphor seems to be divided, between "decorative" and "conventional" metaphors:

> "To use an explanatory metaphor, the decorative view seems to suggest that novel metaphors are situated on the surface of language, like cake icing. Conventional metaphors are products of formerly novel metaphors: over time and with frequent use they have seeped into the main part of the language…"

> (Deignan, 2005, p.3)

Nonetheless, intentionally used, deliberate metaphors have the following attached epithets: creative, poetic, imaginative, creating drama perhaps, but are also importantly decorative. That is, metaphors are mostly noticeable on the surface of the language used. Therefore,

there is no theory for how novel metaphors are to be identified or indeed understood. Since, as Deignan, explains, if we can exchange literal language for the metaphorical, then why use any kind of figurative, metaphorical language. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., in his recently published *Metaphor Wars*, explains,

> "Novel metaphors do not constitute a homogenous category of language. Some novel metaphors have close ties to enduring conceptual metaphors…'Our marriage was a rollercoaster ride through hell" is motivated by the enduring conceptual metaphor RELATIONSHIPS ARE JOURNEYS…Some novel expressions are 'image metaphors', such as the now classic example from poetry "My wife…whose waist is an hour glass", which maps the one detailed image (e.g., the shape an hourglass) onto a target domain (e.g., the shape of the wife's waist). Many psychologists and other still maintain that that there must be a single theory for how all novel metaphors are identified and understood, yet the diversity of novel metaphors seen in language is significant enough to question this assumption."

(Gibbs, 2017, p. 67)

Thus, novel, deliberate, intentional metaphors, when examined more closely, reveal the deeper, unacknowledged conceptual metaphor *Vision as Knowledge,* but are usually fewer in number. The Dante example above in Table 5.3, conveys this through the allegory of the creative poet, one that is novel and deliberate in its effect. Even though deliberate metaphors are very rare indeed in language[121], especially for languages that wish to appear objective, such metaphors require some effort to be understood[122]. According to Lakoff and Turner in their book *More than Cool Reason*, (1989) novel/deliberate metaphor is by itself an extension of a more fundamental or primary metaphor, for example, *Vision as Knowledge,* but metaphors of this sort are not used frequently in practices that try to approach the world in a propositional, formally objective way.

What is interesting, perhaps, is that that such accounting statements arise from deliberate, image-making metaphors; metaphors that remain partial and subjectively motivated in the first instance but are in fact no different from the banal, non-deliberate metaphors used in everyday speech. Instances of novelty or even catachresis, "Accounting is a map/mirror", or

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[121] "Such quantitative measures indicate the relative infrequency of novel metaphors and may explain why conventional metaphors have been studied so much more intensely (Denroche, 2015, p. 31)

[122] "Poetic metaphors are…often original or novel, requiring effort to be understood" (Stern, 2000, p. 177).

"accountants are journalists" (Solomons, 1991b) are systematically applied, but function, similarly to non-deliberate metaphors. These overt metaphors would be intentional metaphors, remaining part of a broader conceptual metaphor, *Vision as objective Knowledge,* which relies on the taken for granted (traditional) ideal of representationally accurate literal language. Intentional metaphors map accounting onto one image, perhaps in approximate ways, to journalism or cartography. But are little different from say something less recognizable, such as, "I think you have overlooked something" in that vision plays a role.

Both metaphors of vision, deliberate and non-deliberate, provide some insight into the privileged spatial position the body should take in relation to knowable phenomena. The rational mind is to be privileged (the interfering body less so) in order to form true knowledge. Knowledge should be inactive, scientifically predisposed, and disengaged from body and others; where the body should be isolated from the world and its affects in order to develop knowledge. The physical body, as an active generator of knowledge is absent, in this account. That is, how the body should be/is situated in relation to the world in order to gain knowledge of it, is, overall, distant in its approach towards objects. And, also, what the epistemological and ontological assumptions are about the world are tied up to space and the subject's observations. These metaphors are normally clear, detailed and filled with rich visual imagery. But they also reveal something else. They reveal how *passive* or *active* the body should be in its approach to knowing some other: the latter more subjective, emotional, even inter-subjective, versus the former, which is less dependent of the physical body (the mind), and a predisposition towards inactivity, passivity, a-priori philosophical reflection, and, more so, neutrality and objectivity.

Overall, intended or deliberate metaphors are extensions of non-deliberate conceptual metaphors. Both deliberate and non-deliberate types force us to think about meaning in new ways. For example, as mentioned earlier, why use a metaphor when we can use a more basic, literal statement. Yet where novel or deliberate metaphors arise their comprehension might take time to understand, where other metaphors are simply part of everyday language. Both metaphors (creative or submerged) may share the same conceptual underpinnings (vision), but no longer bear any resemblance to metaphors at all: they are largely unrecognizable as metaphors, remaining below the surface of investigation of metaphors. However, according to Lakoff and Johnson, both alive and dead are equally as important, at the conceptual level. The more commonly used ones appear in objective, seemingly descriptive detached language, part of what individual speakers discern to *be* literal language.

5.4.2 Non-Deliberate/Submerged Vision Metaphors

Lakoff and Johnson make no real distinction between submerged and deliberately used metaphors. It is felt that this is because they see that there is something problematical about the defining characteristics of literal language. They recognize that non-deliberate metaphors are very much alive in thought but are submerged in language. They are, by their very virtue of familiarity, submerged within discourse and thought[123]. That there is something embodied (immanent or of the human body) in the conventions of language is also important here. These embodied conventions permeate language, assisted by its relations to environments and other shared experiences.

Thus, as Potter (1996) recognizes, there is some degree of impossibility in separating the literal and the metaphorical, where metaphor is subjectively situated in language, and where literal statements are objectively situated in language:

> "In conceptual terms, it is very hard to sustain a clear and reliable distinction between metaphorical and literal uses of language."

> (Potter,1996, p.180).

It also has a lot to do with the division, where a distinction is made between dead (submerged) and alive (overt) metaphors:[124]

> "Part of the difficulty in determining whether a word or phrase is metaphorical depends on the extent to which its metaphoricity is seen as dead or alive."

> (Gibbs, 2017, p.66)

Nevertheless, there are words that are used subconsciously every day that are in no way recognizable as metaphors. Words such as, "I see", when meaning, "I know" is just one example. These metaphors may be viewed as dead, unrecognizable as metaphors. But that would be missing a huge part of what these contribute. It is the argument in the thesis that

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[123] As Potter argues, "I suggest that the metaphorical/literal distinction **should not be treated** as something that needs sorting out before the operation of descriptive discourse can be studied for its rhetorical or constructive work" (p. 181). Potter explains: "The disagreement is not with Lakoff's revealing analysis but with the idea (not pressed by Lakoff) that such an analysis must be restricted to metaphorical constructions" (Potter, 1996, p. 181)

[124] It also has to do with research interest. This is consistent with Pragglejazz Group (2007, p. 30), whose members acknowledge: "depending on one's specific research interests, an analyst could adopt a more liberal scheme and identify as metaphorical any word that currently has, or once possessed, a metaphorical comparison and contrast between its basic and contextual meanings".

these are metaphors nonetheless. That as Gibbs 2017 points out, these metaphors are still very much alive in thought, appearing in our everyday vocabulary (Gibbs, 2017 p. 158).

According to Lakoff and Johnson, an embodied experience is transferred onto some other domain of experience so that it becomes so normalized so as to becomes conventional. That is, once one experience metaphorically shapes another experience repeatedly, this becomes over time more or less the normal way to "see" things; the way things are. For example, "*I see your point of view", "Can you shed some light on this, please",* or *"Could you make clear your position on this"* are all instances in which there is a submerged, backgrounded or underlying conceptual metaphor, as a result of one domain shaping another domain.

Conceptual Metaphors of Vision
UNDERSTANDING is SEEING
IDEAS are LIGHT SOURCES
DISCOURSE is a LIGHT MEDIUM

Table 5.4 Conceptual Metaphors of Vision (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 48)

Lakoff explains that,

> "The experiential basis in this case is the fact that most of what we know comes through vision, and in the overwhelming majority of cases. If we see something, then we know it is true."

> (Lakoff, 1993, p. 240).

For Lakoff, conventional/non-deliberate metaphors reveal a deeper conceptual metaphor. For example,

> "As common as novel metaphor is, its occurrence is rare by comparison with conventional metaphor, which occurs in most sentences we utter."

> (Lakoff, 1993, p. 237)

Non-deliberate metaphor are those metaphors, through repeated use, that become so familiar that there is no misunderstanding as to what the metaphor means[125]. It is mere convention ("I see what you mean"), and hence easier to understand.

5.4.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF METAPHORS SUBMERGED IN THOUGHT

As Gergen (1990, p. 270) writes, even though "a new term thrust into the alien context will seem metaphoric at the outset", eventually this will become part of the fabric of a discipline's language. Through convention, certain *Vision as Knowledge* metaphors become clichéd, presupposed or taken plainly for granted. And once in place, vision becomes accepted culturally, becomes a good way of communicating, of strengthening the bonds between the two domains (vision and knowledge). Whilst the metaphor, assumed as being alive, is much closer to the common notion that they are **not** normally associated with the context of our everyday conventional, even assumed literal, language, they are there, at least, in spirit. Separating metaphors into dead and alive categories depends on the analysis being done. Pragglejazz (2010), a group of metaphor scholars, explains that the distinction between novel and conventional metaphor depends on the specific research interest(s):

> "There are many words that have metaphoric origins, but no longer retain these roots in contemporary use. Lakoff (1987) gives the examples of pedigree, comprehend, and grasp. *Pedigree* originally arose as a metaphorical extension of the French term for a crane's foot *pied de grue*) that served as the basis of similarity between the foot of a crane and a diagram of a family tree. But this metaphorical mapping is no longer current to contemporary speakers and thus pedigree is a true "dead metaphor." On the other hand, for the verb *comprehend* the original metaphorical meaning of *take hold* is dead, whereas the metaphorical mapping of the physical act of talking hold onto mental act of comprehension is still active…As usual, scholars are urged simply to be explicit in acknowledging the bases for their decisions at specific points in applying the procedures in MIP."

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[125] Our approach may be viewed as a process that seeks to isolate the body metaphor of vision words in the language used in conceptual frameworks. It is pointed out that conceptual frameworks are closer to legal documentation and appear very representational or literal indeed. They are unlike novels that brim with creative metaphoric content (See Black, 1954-1955, who focuses on creative metaphors). The approach then has to take on some kind of combination between reading the frameworks, analyzing etymological links, looking more deeply into embedded word use, and deriving (specifically visual) metaphorical language.

Metaphors tend to die when they no longer are recognizable as metaphors, for *that community*. These metaphors underlie thinking, and are therefore, not overt as novel metaphors. But are important in underlying a deeper connection between body and environment. That is, that overt metaphors are more commonly examined in the accounting literature is interesting assumes only that alive metaphors structure thought, alone.

"Conceptual Metaphor Theory assumes that the metaphoricity of lexicalized metaphors is active on the level of the non-conscious processes."

(Muller, cited in Gibbs, 2011, p. 38)

In other words, submerged, dead metaphors can be more alive, simply because they are sustaining a certain view of things. And this view is determined by a deep connectivity to lifeworld and experience of that lifeworld. It is recognized that dead metaphors do have life, "at least in the less conscious regimes of linguistic attention" (Muller, 2011, p. 38). And only in time is the metaphor judged closer to the literal end: deemed fitful to a community of subjects, who share experiences. According to Denroche (2015),

"The distinction is between metaphor which is original and unfamiliar, on the one hand ('doing metaphor') ….and metaphor which has been conventionalized and is already part of the corpus of the language community, on the other ('using metaphor')."

(Denroche, 2015 p. 30).

Vision metaphors, in this sense, forms part of the 'conventional', or submerged, category. But vision metaphors also form part of the 'novel' or intentional category too. But importantly, what is indeed dead metaphorically is actually alive in the way thinking is governed:

"The dead metaphor account misses an important point; namely, that what is deeply entrenched, hardly noticed, and thus effortlessly used is most active in our thought. The metaphors above may be highly conventional and effortlessly used but this does

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[126] Pragglejazz Group consists: *P*eter Crisp, *R*ay Gibbs, *A*lan Cienki, *G*raham Low, *G*erard Steen, *L*ynne Cameron*, E*lena Semino*, J*oe Grady, *A*lice Deignan, and Zoltan Kovecses

not mean they have lost their vigour in thought and that they are dead. On the contrary, they are 'alive' in the most important sense – they govern our thought – they are "metaphors we live by."

(Kovecses, 2002. ix)

Therefore, as Kovecsces acknowledges, dead, sunk, submerged or non-deliberate metaphors are important precisely *because* those metaphors have become *acceptable* to that *community*. It being the case that:

"Those that are most alive and most deeply entrenched, efficient, powerful are those that are so automatic as to be unconscious and effortless."

(Lakoff and Turner, 1989, p. 129).

What this informs is that vision metaphors, broadly, go deeper than "seeing" or "viewing". And we can trace the word's meaning back to a bodily (metaphoric) domain that has not lost its visual metaphoricity, but which has now become part of the conventional, everyday group speak of a community of professionals[127]. These metaphors are so entrenched within everyday language that they appear unremarkable. As Gibbs puts it,

"My general point is that there are no simple continuums between so called conventional metaphors and novel metaphors and between dead and alive metaphors…This conclusion suggests that researchers should not assume that conventional metaphors are never understood to express metaphorical meanings and do not count as instances of metaphorical language."

(Gibbs, 2017, p. 67)

Thus, Lakoff and Turner (1989) suggest it is wrong to think that the language is merely literal simply because it has left behind its metaphorical root. Submerged or non-deliberate metaphors in our languages are those that have passed the litmus test of acceptability, and

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[127] However, they (the old meanings – knowledge as idle reflection) then become viewed as subjective, meaningless out of which new forms of knowledge, clear and transparent ideas emerge, effectively evolving out of the fossilized remains of their past. So that the aim, over time, becomes a hastened attempt to grab at, to make fully visual/literal: "It is one of the strange sad ironies of religion that the very tradition of religious protest, that most boldly proclaimed the need for individuals to read and interpret the Bible, produced the Biblical literalists who today make the authority of the Vatican look squishy by comparison." (Turner, 2006, p. 235)

have become, more or less, conventional. Overall, for conceptual metaphor theory, an alive-dead distinction appears to be a dispensable bifurcation:

> "Thus, CMT makes the distinction between dead and live/poetic metaphor redundant, showing that the dead metaphor theory is guilty of the confusion between metaphors that are conventional and part of our cognitive system, and historical metaphors that no longer exist."

> (Maalej and Yu, 2011, p. 8)

In this next section, the method used to identify these submerged metaphors in the thesis is explained.

5.5 How Does the Methodology Link with Method?

According to Lakoff and Johnson, an experience of inactivity in the body is attributed to passive looking. Passive stimuli are passively received and then re-built in thought. According to Lakoff and Johnson, embodied cognition derives from the body and its activity, not from passivity and the presupposition of disembodied rationality.

> "Reason is not disembodied, as the tradition has largely held, but arises from the nature of our brains, bodied and bodily experience. This is just not the innocuous and obvious claim that we need a body to reason; rather, it is the striking claim that the very structure of reason itself comes from the details of our embodiment."

> (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p.4)

Various body-world engagements impact on the type of knowledge that is privileged; and the type of new meanings (extended embodiment: sight + touch and/or hearing) that we apply in order for knowledge to be obtained. And that the objects of knowledge possess true features that are re-presentable, and can be reflected if new models could be developed in order to reflect again. This approach (the sedate/inactivity of the body) is how true knowledge *should* be obtained, in the first instance. Thus, taking a *passive and reflective approach towards the world* pushes the subject closer and closer to gaining true knowledge. Assuming, of course, that vision is possible, and that there are, true features that inhere in things, and which can be reflected or mirrored without distortion, these are base assumptions of knowledge and objectivity.

Time is also a factor. For vision and reflection metaphors, there is a strong tendency to think that objects or the world possesses certain fixed features that do not alter over time, and remain consistently out-there to be reflected and accurately represented in thought. This understanding, according to Lakoff and Johnson, arises out of the relationships subjects' bodies have with their environments, which in the west, may be a result of controlled behavior which arises from the body that structures its activity as a literal goal. As they argue, vision, spectating, re-presentations, images, reflections and mirroring metaphors, and their associated connections to knowledge, arise because the body is withdrawn, so as to reflect. The body in control, comfortably distant from events, associates knowledge with a more, reflective, spectatorship position. Primacy is given to knowing through seeing, over and above, more practical doings.

But this is also a metaphor. Rather than social participation or of doing things or creative activity, the position that is favored is one where the viewer desperately attempts to achieve greater distance from objects, even from its own body, because true knowledge must be disembodied; yet we cannot physically escape the bodies we have. Here, the object is understood as carrying features, or qualities that can be represented, and that more distance is required in order to know them. This therefore implies that the world is viewed as having qualities that can be reflected. Achieving the right position is what is required, if indeed those qualities cannot be observed. These are all metaphors that derive from perception, spatiality and basic lived experience.

And so, vision metaphors, those associated with passivity and idle, visual reflection, provide evidence of how accounting conceptual frameworks conceptualize knowledge, as a metaphor that is deeply bound up with Western culture. If there are assumed to be similar features to be found, then the metaphors that arise from this assumption will provide evidence of the sort of conceptions accounting conceptual frameworks have, either as an inactive eye that passively receives or as a more active eye that has to keep up with the overwhelming complexity of what it sees.

The methodology of Lakoff and Johnson, therefore, and those committed to embodied cognition, reveal that metaphors are submerged in language and thought and are never static. Rather, *vision as knowledge* is always ongoing, changing, but somehow unacknowledged, as a metaphorical part of the construction of accounting conceptual frameworks. It is felt that, therefore, that this methodology is helpful in explaining change that develops not merely from the accepted conventional notion of a representational conception of knowledge; that is, the mind and mirror, to new conceptions that have to fit onto reality. That

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vision is a sort of passive, neutral way of knowing the world is not always absolute, but in fact it alters in a very subtle, backgrounded and consequently unrecognizable way. It is therefore that the methodology makes clear that sense making and meaning making are deeply cultural and embedded. And, at the same time, also are never completely fixed. It is always in a state of becoming, rather than being - constantly ongoing, in the re-experiencing and re-conceptualizing of the world.

Thus, the aim in our next section, the methods section, attempts to reveal how deep the vision metaphor goes, and to draw out submerged vision towards the surface. The section explains how vision metaphors are discovered. It is conceived that through Lakoff and Johnson's thoughts on vision and metaphor, and the relationship between body and mind, that if the accounting conceptual framework helps the reader experience the world as possessing inherent features, and they no longer possess those features (according to what authors such as Norman Macintosh have claimed), then there could be some interesting findings regarding claims about knowledge and objectivity in the accounting conceptual framework. It is felt that the metaphors reflect some of the ways that seeing works in relation to the world. If a passive knowing is presupposed, then an idle, passive and receiving approach towards the world should appear somewhere deep within language. In other words, vision metaphors have a story to tell.

5.5.1 THE INDO-EUROPEAN ROOT

The research here using Proto language is an addition to the work done on metaphor in accounting communication studies in the accounting literature. It has been common in linguistics to trace languages back to a common origin, but has not been used before in accounting to better understanding and theorize about meaning development in the context of accounting policy making. It is acknowledged, and suggested, that a deeper study of accounting metaphors is needed. And it is here that an attempt is made to understand and highlight the complexity of meaning in accounting conceptual frameworks through using Proto-language as a way to help to shed light on the evolution of vision as a metaphor for objective knowledge in these frameworks.

The Indo-European language is an origin from which most of our day languages spring (Ratzlaff, 2011). There are over seven hundred modern Indo-European languages, which span from Europe to Asia. Their importance for thesis is that Proto language, "brings us back to the world of man and man's beginnings" (Ratzlaff, 2011, p 18). German, Russian, Spanish, French, even Urdu and Hindi, all derive from a common stock of Indo-European

languages that inform to us about these primitive beginnings. And these "beginnings" are still very much intact in language to this today:

> "In spite of great semantic changes, the primitive notions of the origin of words are still deeply anchored in their etymon (In Greek, 'real meaning')."

> (Ratzlaff, 2011, p. 18)

English is one of those languages that has an Indo-European root, even though it is much different from Russian or Hindi. Take for example the word "Knowledge" in English. The word "Knowledge" has meaning that has changed little from its etymon in proto language. The root of "knowledge" is *Gno,* where the *Gno* connects to *Kno*, in the English infinitive form of the verb, "to know". However, languages such as English carry with them today the hallmarks of a thousand-year old set of common ancestral roots that provide evidence of an earlier time that is much more physical, visceral, concrete or experiential. That is, these roots or proto language are associated with "man, his coming to life, and his body" (Ratzlaff, 2011, p. 17). And this is the significance of using roots here in the thesis. The root reveals the body, deep, within the structure of words/phrases and metaphors, either as an active body, to do with physical activity, such as lifting or running, or inactivity, to do with observing or knowing with the receiving intellect.

For the research here, primitive languages carry with them the remnants of this physical/active body that is submerged, obscured even, in our contemporary language use. Importantly, the body (in an active/inactive) state, is hidden, at least in so far as one reads the word and thinks about the physical side of, say, an abstract noun, such as truth, love, hatred or misery. Hidden in the contemporary meaning of the word is the physical. There is more evidence of the activity of the body, which, importantly for the thesis, resides in the vision metaphor. In light of this, an analysis of the vision metaphor's root would reveal the body as intertwined with vision and, by extension, objective knowledge. For instance, the word "observation" connects to the root **weid – to see*, where an etymological search reveals a connection to a sort of survivalist instinct, perhaps associated with awareness and self-preservation in the mindset of a more primitive society.

It is felt that an exploration of the vision metaphor's Proto Indo-European root reveals not only the deeply embodied connectivity of body with world, it also yields an explanation of the extent to which vision metaphor is associated with the body, even today; where the body is a metaphor for vision: either seeing *through* (inactive body) vis a vis seeing *with* (active body) the eyes. Proto language reveals the extent to which the body is revealed/non-revealed

in analyzing the vision metaphor's proto root, and how that root provides examples of how objective knowledge is understood in the context of conceptual frameworks (mind of reason or embodied human sight). In other words, does vision metaphor evidence a root which indicates that the body simply receives knowledge, which therefore corresponds to or is an articulation of, the non-revelatory/situated position the body (disembodied). The inner eye of the mind, without body in a sense, which knows the world around it from above and outside. Where the eye is more active, the Proto language indicates or reveals the body in a state of constant activity or alertness. The Proto Indo-European root indicates the spectrum of embodied-ness in the vision metaphor, giving clues to the relationship between vision and knowledge. Where knowledge is no longer conceived in terms of a passive, de-situated viewer, the activity brings forth new ways of thinking about what is conceived of as "objective knowledge".

5.6 HOW THE METHOD IS DEPLOYED

In this section, the thesis' findings are revealed from our identification of vision metaphors, which were discovered from the discourse-content analysis of the conceptual frameworks. As mentioned, the traditional conceptual metaphor, *Vision as objective knowledge*, derives from a mostly inactive and distanced approach towards the world[128], that in turn is more submerged or backgrounded in discourse.

Having said this there was no initial idea about what types of vision metaphors might be found in the conceptual frameworks analyzed. But what was considered was that those vision metaphors that were more associated with bodily inactivity: mirroring, refraction and passive reflection, and which also intimated some kind of modernist confidence in passive idle reflection and representational accuracy, was a deeply buried, inherent part of accounting conceptual frameworks. And this was because, to some extent, of the way the reality of corporations is experienced for accountants, as possessing inherent features which geometric Double Entry Accounting systems model.

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[128]Thus, our aim is to identify metaphors that are suggestive of the body: a passive, inactive approach towards events in the world: mirroring/image-making/accurate reflections. And then try and study them by tracing them over time. Thus, we attempt to understand these **types** of vision metaphors associated with reflection/mirroring in accounting conceptual frameworks. And we aim to trace the historical development of such metaphors. However, at this stage, we were uncertain about what they would look like. That is, we want to (a) identify underlying vision metaphors and (b) understand something about their development/how they evolve over time.

Since vision is experienced as knowledge which is disembodied (as little of the body is promoted) this movement can be tracked somewhat consistently over time. Because little of the body is used (conscious bodies) when the eyes rest on an object, those metaphors are investigated and explored over time. Since it is assumed, like Lakoff and Johnson, that the body experiences the world as having features or qualities to be known, the body is assumed to merely receive. Here, the body is presumed also idle in the development of knowledge, which incidentally impacts on the type of knowledge outcomes. Thus, privileged knowledge, according to Lakoff and Johnson, connects with the inactivity of the lived body in space (assumed unaffected by space): the body looking and reflecting on things. It is assumed from this that vision metaphor will feature the primitive body in its proto etymon in two ways: more of the active body metaphor in the vision metaphor (running, walking, creating, cutting, moving) or more of the inactive body in the vision metaphor's Proto Indo-European etymon (speculating, idling, reflecting, observing). Just to point out here. The thesis is written in a fairly descriptive style from this point forward.

Inactive and active vision metaphors are identified from the content analysis. It is discovered that vision metaphors appear, mainly, in these two forms described above, connected to the Proto Indo-European root: (a) ones that are more closely related with bodily inactivity or (b) ones that are more closely related to bodily activity. Which metaphors are found, how these metaphors were analyzed over time, and what the eventual findings were, are explained here in this chapter. In sum, this chapter is used to convey how the metaphor analysis was conducted. That is, basically, what is found from the approach taken.

This section explains how the key visual (inactive) aspects of conceptual framework's vision metaphors (body metaphors) were discovered. The way this was done was first to look for visually associated words (metaphor of the body). This was done by exploring the etymology of each word in each of the conceptual frameworks in order to discover if the word had an association with vision, etymologically. This was then narrowed down a little further. I wanted to understand just how visual (inactive) these vision words could be. The vision word (metaphor's) Indo-European root was searched. This was in order to determine whether the visual word (metaphor) had a closer association with greater embodiment (hence more of an active sort of body) or a closer association with inactivity in the metaphor's Proto Indo-European root.

The word's primitive root (Indo European root) is analyzed in order to determine *just how much* of the vision metaphor utilizes the body as a metaphor for vision concepts. The root is derived after the initial etymological search in order to determine the extent to which the

body is active in the vision metaphor. What this does is isolate those vision words that we associate *more with inactive vision* (disembodied inactivity) as opposed to those vision words (metaphors) that we associate *with active vision* (greater embodiment or activity). Subsequently, these inactive types of vision words (metaphors) are analyzed in order to trace the historical development of knowledge in accounting conceptual frameworks. Thus, actual process is explained below in Table 5.5, revealing what is discovered from the methods used.

Table 5.5 - Process of method
Step 1 – W-Matrix is used, a web-based linguistic analysis software to perform a word count of all the words in the framework.
Step 2 – Look for deliberate metaphors, (image/representation metaphors – e.g. mirrors, maps) as a first step. Note: there are (17 instances of deliberate uses). The thesis' focus, however, is on the submerged vision metaphors (please refer below).
Step 3 – Look for Submerged metaphors (not so obvious, everyday words, "I see", "view", "hindsight"). If the non-intentional has an etymological connection with vision (check if whether the word has a connection with vision – please refer to table 5.6 in this chapter[129]). If the word has an etymological association with vision, include; if not, exclude.
Step 4 (Isolate Submerged Vision metaphors) – Use the Proto Indo-European Root (P.I.E) in order to isolate the vision metaphors that either had an *active (more of the body in the vision metaphor)* or *inactive (pertaining to the mind)* P.I.E root (which indicates *less of the body in the vision metaphor*). This is in order to isolate those metaphors that have closer association with activity (Vision as Body) or a closer association with inactivity of the eye (Vision as Mind). This thinking can be compartmentalized as follows: Activity of the body in the P.I.E Root = More active vision　　　Inactivity of the body (concept of mind) in the P.I.E Root = More inactive vision
Step 4 - We find that the roots (P.I.E root/morpheme) is active or inactive in the vision metaphors, which splits category vision metaphors into two: active or inactive.
Step 5 – Trace these in conceptual frameworks over time and identify trends and patterns to try and answer the research question(s).

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[129] This was largely an intuitive process, and required interpretation and judgment. Some words had a clear connection to vision, such as picture making, drawing and those alike, were included as part of the analysis.

The corpus based content analysis is approached in an objective, consistent and practical way[130]. The thesis attempts to remain faithful to what Steen (2007) observes below:

"Converging evidence…is exciting and attractive, provided the same norms of data collection and analysis are adhered to in evaluating the evidence obtained with one type of method as with the other type of method."

(Steen, 2007, p. 23)

Thus, software is used in order to look for candidate vision metaphors. The software chosen, W-Matrix, is a web-based corpus analysis tool developed by Paul Rayson at the University of Lancaster. This software helped with the extraction of linguistic data (in the thesis' case, words that were possibly vision metaphors). The software allows researchers to gather relevant textual content for further analysis. Scholars have made frequent use of W-Matrix. And they have shown it to be effective in metaphor analysis (See Koller, et al, 2008) W-Matrix has some basic, as well as technical, word search features. And these features allow the researcher to scrutinize linguistic units (words) for further analysis. It is discovered that W-Matrix assists with the identification of specific words through frequency lists which are used herein. And it is found this tool is useful in order to extract metaphorically used words. A brief description of W-Matrix is given now. And why it was considered useful in developing the analysis.

W-Matrix generates a word count, lists of keywords, concordance and collocation analysis. The frequency lists we found were particularly useful here. This is because specific vision words could be identified through isolating each word and then comparing the word with its etymology. The software helped to alleviate the burden of manual analysis by clustering words under a frequency category. This meant, for example, that W-Matrix collected words, such as articles, "a" and "the", conjunctions such as "and", prepositions, "of", and "in, for

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[130] Walters and Young (2008, page 807), for example, have looked for "metaphors manifesting as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs idiomatic phrases and broader allusions". The researcher's own approach in the process of identifying metaphors is dependent of course on what the researcher is interested in analyzing. Charteris-Black (2004) has also suggested something similar where metaphor identification has been pursued, explaining some of the nuances of doing research on metaphors: "My approach to metaphor identification has two stages: the first requires a close reading of a sample of texts with the aim of identifying candidate metaphors. These candidate metaphors were then examined in relation to the criteria for the definition of metaphor…It will be recalled that these were the presence of incongruity or semantic tension – either at linguistic, pragmatic, or cognitive levels – even if this shift occurred some before and has become conventionalized. Those that did not satisfy this criterion were excluded from further analysis. Words that are commonly used with metaphoric sense are then classified as metaphor keywords and it is possible to measure the presence of such keywords quantitatively in the corpus. The second stage is a further qualitative phase in which corpus contexts are examined to determine whether each use of a key-word is metaphoric or literal" (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 35).

example and demonstratives such as "this" or "that" together so that each individual word could then be analyzed in whether the word related to vision in some way.

5.6.1 STEP 1- BEGINNING THE PROCESS OF IDENTIFICATION

Attending Lancaster University's summer school in early 2015 provided basic training using W-Matrix. Specifically, how the software could be used to identify metaphor in discourse (Deignan and Semino, 2010). This W-Matrix package has distinctive features. One of which allows the extraction of words from texts. The approach described in this chapter was carried out after returning from Lancaster, and it was decided that the W-Matrix software would be suitable in terms of isolating specific words.

W-Matrix was accessed with the permission of Paul Rayson, who developed W-Matrix at Lancaster University. Paul kindly provided a password and username. From there, the conceptual frameworks were uploaded to W-Matrix. After initial "cleansing": removing stop-words, full stops, tokenizing, stemming and lemmatizing, that is, removing all extraneous bits and pieces contained within the conceptual frameworks, W-Matrix is run to look for vision metaphors[131]. Initially, as a starting point, those words that had a more synonymic, etymologic or connotative relationship with sight was identified as a first step.

Step 1 *Conceptual Framework Upload for analysis*

Figure 5.1 – Upload process

W-Matrix's word frequency tool is then used to search through each framework. Below this is an excerpt from the International Accounting Standards' Board 1989 Framework and its frequency list. Once the document had been uploaded, W-Matrix produced the list of words, frequency, and relative frequency.

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[131] The following Conceptual frameworks were analyzed: FASB (1978, 1980, 1982, 1985), IASB 1989, ASB 1999, IASB 2010 and the IASB 2015 Exposure Draft. As to be expected, the conceptual frameworks were in PDF format. Unfortunately, the texts cannot be simply uploaded into the software and a result produced. They first have to be converted to Plain or Rich Text Format before analysis. The second approach was to pre-process or cleanse the documents. Basically, this approach meant performing a lot of basic editing of the documents – removing odd punctuation, removing white spaces, numbers, and capitalization when converted to plain text.
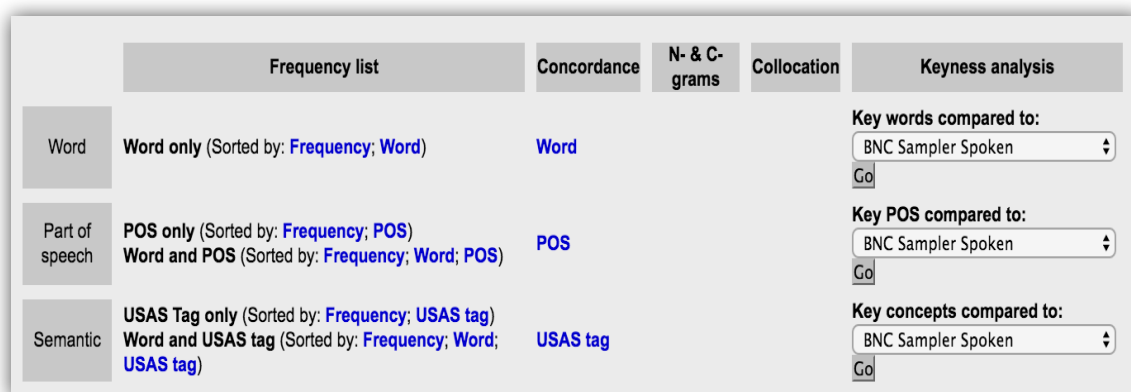
Below (figure 5.2) is an excerpt of the frequency and relative frequency from W-Matrix (e.g. provided is from the International Accounting Standards Board, 2010). As shown, individual words can be isolated and studied in more detail. This was the basic starting point to start looking for vision metaphors.

Figure 5.2 – Screenshots of the W-Matrix frequency function and process of searching for vision metaphors

5.6.2 STEP 2 - IDENTIFYING SUBMERGED VISION METAPHORS USING ETYMOLOGY

W-Matrix is used in order to run a basic search for each word that appeared in each framework. Each word is then individually selected, comparing the basic meaning with the word's etymology. I tried to establish if the word was associated on, some level, with vision. This was a starting point. Therefore, I included words that had an etymologically visual (bodily) association for further investigation. Basically, W-Matrix produced a word count for each specific word, which then compared with the etymology of the vision metaphor in order to see if the word had some connection with vision. An example is given below, using some screenshots from the IASB 1989 framework's word frequency profile.

also	29	0.29	Concordance
alternative	2	0.02	Concordance
alternatives	1	0.01	Concordance
although	8	0.08	Concordance
always	1	0.01	Concordance
among	2	0.02	Concordance
amortisation	1	0.01	Concordance
amount	21	0.21	Concordance
amounts	11	0.11	Concordance
an	139	1.38	Concordance
analysis	1	0.01	Concordance

Figure 5.3 Screenshot of word frequency profile

The illustration above is an excerpt from W-Matrix word count. For example, the word "*amount*" appeared 21 times in the IASB 1989 conceptual framework. *Amount* has the following etymology: late 13c. "*To go up, rise, mount (a horse)," from Old French amonter "rise, go-up; mean, signify,*" from *amont* (adv.) "upward, uphill," literally "to the mountain" (12c.). Since "amount", we felt, had no remarkable association with vision - aside from some imagery associated with "rising" - we decided to exclude from the analysis. We then moved on to the next word, continuing the process on each word subsequently. We performed the etymological search using a standard online etymological dictionary. The dictionary provides dates of the earliest year for which there is a surviving written record of the word.

flows	4	0.04	Concordance
focuses	1	0.01	Concordance
focusing	1	0.01	Concordance
following	3	0.03	Concordance
follows	3	0.03	Concordance
for	75	0.74	Concordance

Figure 5.3 Screenshot example

Word = Focus

Etymology = 1775 in optics, "bring into focus" (transitive); 1807 in the figurative sense, from **focus**(n.). Intransitive use by 1864, originally in photography. Related: *Focused*; *focusing*; less commonly *focussed*; *focussing*.

Visual relationship = Derives from optics = *Vision Word*

Figure 5.4 Example of decision to include for analysis

Using etymology is useful because it is easier to connect the bodily experience (vision) with the word itself. However, this is only a starting point. Just *how much (the activity)* of the body appears within the visual word can traced, by going further back to primitive roots/body word's morpheme, herein, the word's Proto Indo-European root. This is usually related to the word's etymology. The Proto Indo-European root determines, it is felt, how inactive or

active the body is in the vision word. This also eliminates some ambiguity over whether word is indicative of vision or whether it is truly a vision word - less associated with the body that the Proto Indo-European root evidences.

5.6.3 STEP 3 – DELIBERATE METAPHORS DISCOVERED

As mentioned, novel/deliberately metaphors are those metaphors that are creative, alive, and require effort to be understood, but not a lot of effort to recognize and are very few in number in accounting conceptual frameworks. The procedure for identifying nom-deliberate vision metaphors in the conceptual framework required a combination of both etymological analysis and manual concordance analysis, in order to understand what they could mean. For deliberate metaphors, etymological analysis was not used. Overall, deliberately used metaphors were exclusive only to the SFAC no. 2 (1980) qualitative characteristics statement. These metaphors were picked up in the initial word frequency profile where some words were singled out because they did not appear to belong to the category of everyday conventional visually metaphorical language (please refer to the following section). The concordance (using W-Matrix) was checked in order to see whether the word had a more deliberate or non-deliberate usage, in the event the event the word was used literally anyway. These novel metaphors are fairly obvious, but require interpretation in order to understand what they mean[132]. However, when understood, it was found there were no deliberate metaphors, let alone vision metaphors, in conceptual frameworks after 1980 (17 instances in total), and so therefore attention was given to more submerged vision metaphors. Therefore, the thesis' main focus was to look for more deeply imbedded vision metaphors, those that were more deeply rooted in disembodied type of vision metaphor associated with a disembodied type of knowledge. The way this was done is shown in step four below.

5.6.4 STEP 4 –CATEGORIZE SUBMERGED METAPHORS USING PROTO LANGUAGE

The Proto Indo European (P.I.E) root is the smallest grammatical unit in language. Proto language is very old, some 5000 years old. Many western languages evolve from this more basic Indo-European Root. In fact, our modern languages conceal quite a lot of the rawness of our language's early history, which is still active in the English language today. The word's historic meaning resides in a more physical, human activity. And this gets lost over time: the

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[132] Yu (1998, p. 29) explains, citing Lakoff and Johnson (1993), that "creative literary metaphor generally depends on conventional metaphor in generation and interpretation". That is, we should see a more conventional conceptual metaphor "Vision is Knowledge" even in linguistic "Novel Metaphors".

physical effort of the body disappears. Shuttleworth (2017) cites the British philosopher and author Owen Barfield on this point:

> "…One of the first things that a student of etymology…discovers for himself is that every modern language…is apparently nothing, from beginning to end, but an unconscionable tissue of dead, or petrified metaphors…If we trace the meanings of a great many words…about as far back as etymology can take us, we are at once made to realize that an overwhelming proportion, if not all, of them referred in earlier days to one of these two solid things – a solid, sensible object, or some animal (probably human) activity."

(Shuttleworth, 2017, p. 14)

What is striking is the presence of bodily activity that appears within Indo-European languages. Embodied activity (the body as a metaphor) resides in language, to a greater or lesser extent. This physicality influences our modern language even today, but at some remove. It is felt that the physicality of Indo-European language gives some clues to the way we think about knowledge today, at least metaphorically: as passively modernist and representational (less of the body and therefore *more* connected to thought/mental representation)[133]. We are mostly unconscious of these metaphors of the body (vision) in everyday language and thought. This is a way of talking about the kinds of knowledge pursued over time (meanings are traded in because of the difficulties in making an image) as the visual interaction between body (inactivity) and world is possible. Therefore, it is assumed by exploring the root that we normally associate vision and knowledge with less activity of the body. And these are the words that are examined. That the less of the body there is within the root, then the more we can observe that there is a higher presence of vision as a disembodied form of knowing.

Vision as disengaged knowledge

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Indo European Root = Less activity of the physical body

The history of our language in the body has not disappeared. And it is assumed that the very primitive basis of language in the body derives from a more abstract domain of thought.

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[133] Epistemological realism stems from an inactive relationship with the world. Reading and writing may imply a more sedentary form of knowledge that derives from a mostly inactive body: siting, reading and writing, for instance.

Using the example of *emotion*, Chateris Black (2004) in *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis* reveals also how deep the body goes in modern semantics:

"The covert, subliminal or unconscious function of metaphor in influencing emotions should permit us to consider the etymological relatedness of the terms motion and emotion in English – emotion originates in the French *movoir*: 'motion.'"

(Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 251)

Emotion (n.)
1570s, "A (social) moving, stirring, agitation," from Middle French *émotion* (16c.), from Old French *emouvoir* "stir up" (12c.), from Latin *emovere* "move out, remove, agitate," from assimilated form of *ex-* "out" (see *ex-*) + *movere* "to move" (see *move* (v.)). Sense of "strong feeling" is first recorded 1650s; extended to any feeling by 1808.

Figure 5.5 Example of word 'emotion's' etymological connection to the body

Therefore, it is the Proto Indo-European root that we used to identify the origin of specific words in the body: either more of the body (where vision is more active) or less of the body (where the body is inactive)[134]. And these bodily origins are located from the word frequency profile from each of the frameworks studied. These origins help determine a less active or a more active vision metaphor. The search provided a deeper understanding, drawing out the relation between the nature of a concept and the body. It is discovered that the etymological search helped in establishing the relation between the word and vision. The Proto Indo-European root is used to determine the extent to which vision was either, (a) a more inactive, reflective approach to knowledge attainment or (b) a more active, relationship, indicating an alternative conception of knowledge. The P.I.E (Proto Indo European) root here established the body's relationship with the vision word, signaling either the vision metaphor as active/inactive.

That is, did the vision metaphor possess more *of the body or less of the body?* From this, and the type of knowledge was attributed to the activity of the body (less or more) by using the Proto Indo-European Root or P.I.E. For example, we could see that the metaphor "*Hindsight*"

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[134] The reason for this is the way the word connects more strongly to vision. Some words connoted vision, but on closer inspection suggested an alternative meaning. Some of the ambiguity was resolved by focussing on the root, since some words connote vision, whereas others had a much closer association with another activity; usually suggestive of a more subjective rather objective correspondence with something.

had a root in vision (*weid – to see). From the Root, it is identified that some, but not all words had a root in the bodily activity of vision (inactivity). Whereas other roots were connected to activity (like, moving things *tragh, or protecting, *ser). But they did have a root in the physical nature of the body, even though the word was etymologically associated with sight in step 3. Therefore, when tracing the word back to a more basic, more elemental root (for example, "anticipate", whose root is *kap – meaning to grasp), it is observed that there is, at the metaphor's very root, a primitive human activity. The human activity motivates the appearance of the body metaphor historically. There are activities in thought. Activities that relate more to the body. Examples include grasping, cutting, moving, even plaiting (*plek)[135]; and some that are less connected to the body: observing (*weid) or existing (*es).

And the reason for this is that Proto-Indo European (P.I.E) root highlights the very latent process of metaphorical body in the word's definition. The P.I.E root reveals the physical effort of the body in the beginning. This can be attributed more to vision and thought. Vision either requires *less or more* physical effort. The latter (the less) translates to a subject passively speculating about another object: as if the object possesses qualities that provides knowledge *directly* to mind. What is recognized is that the further we go back in time to early cultures; the word's contemporary meaning derives from some process of human activity. An activity that conceptualizes activities like seeing/vision. And this process using the root is either active (more body, i.e. moving, cutting, grasping, and so on) or inactive (observing). It is suggested that a root that moves towards the inactive end of the spectrum implies more vision. Hence, this implies more absolute vision as a form of knowing. A root that tends towards activity of the body meant more application of the body. This is less related to pure vision (disembodiment inactivity, and pure, direct knowledge). Thus, the etymology was used to locate the visual association with each word initially. The P.I.E root is then used to identify if the word had a stronger association with vision and, specifically disembodiment. This disembodied conception of vision as a metaphor for knowledge is studied. And these are studied in order to see if this inactive form of knowing altered over time.

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[135] It is found that the roots of certain words have these quite active/physical meaning pertaining to the body over mind.

5.6.5 STEP **5 – T**HREE **S**UBMERGED **V**ISION **M**ETAPHORS**: A**CTIVE AND **I**NACTIVE

5.6.5.1 INACTIVE **I**NDO**-E**UROPEAN **R**OOTS

Root = Observation/observing

From the above examination of the P.I.E root, it is discovered that the roots indicate how common vision as a metaphor for knowledge appears in language ("viewing", "hindsight" and "awareness", or "the view is that…"). These roots are linked strongly with a disengaged *form* of vision as a metaphor for direct epistemology. These metaphors had the strongest connection with vision as disembodied, disengaged reasoning because there was little evidence of activity of the human body in the metaphor's Indo-European Root.

Vision is passive, receptive in the way it conceptualizes knowledge. For example, "I now have seen the errors of my ways" or "Hindsight is 20:20", are examples. These metaphors provide evidence of knowledge as more reflective or based on direct wisdom. They are speculative, associated with by-standing, looking, passivity, the internal eye of the mind.

Yet, it was also found from the root analysis that other connected disengaged type of metaphors of vision were discovered. These had connections with bodily inactivity because of their roots. The first is knowledge (epistemology - *gno – to know). The second is existence (ontology – *es – to be/to exist). Both categories also were associated etymologically to intellectual vision in the first instance. The P.I.E root, which goes further back in time, indicated that these vision metaphors had a strong association with passive knowledge and existence respectively. Therefore, these were considered interesting to explore further. So, for the first, there is a vision metaphor etymologically. And then the root is used in order to categorize as *Observation, Knowing,* or *Existing.*

*Root = Knowing (*gno – to know)*

It was thought important to include these categories for one reason. Because they could reveal key insights into how accounting conceives of knowledge. Recognition, for example, is included under this Knowledge category, and of course, is an important vision metaphor. This is because of the way accountants incorporate/give visibility to economic activity (existence) through the accounting system of GAAP. Recognition

Root = Existing – (*es – to be/to exist)

Secondly, an existence additional category is found. This relates to accounting objectivity. This category relates to objects and how best to represent them: what accounting seeks to make *re*-present in accounting statements. And "Representation" as part of the existence or "ontological" category indicates *re*-presentation. Presenting what exists out-there. This was considered an important category to include because it reveals how accounting conceptual frameworks conceive of existence and objects. How to represent corporate reality, and what economic features exists out-there for accounting rules to reflect. Therefore, how real things are made re-present by accounting rules in the annual accounting statements relies on ontological statements: statements not only about what things exist out-there, but how existence is. Below a brief example is given. The table below shows how the word, in this case, representation, was identified as an interesting metaphor worth exploring further. Below the etymology of the word is identified in order to ascertain whether the word has an etymological past that foregrounds vision. The Root of the word is used in order to establish the connection to the body. For example, for *representation*, the reader can observe below how the process was done.

Metaphor	Etymology of metaphor	Visual Connection
Representation	Late 14c - "to bring to mind by description," also "to symbolize, serve as a sign or symbol of; serve as the type or embodiment of;" from Old French representer" present, show, portray" (12c.). from Latin repraesentare "make present, set in view, show, exhibit, display," - *Late Middle English (in the sense 'image, likeness'): from Old French representation or Latin repraesentatio(n-), from repraesentare 'bring before, exhibit' (see represent).*	So, representation has something to do with *showing* and *portraying...images and likeness*

Table 5.6 Visual etymology of 'representation'.

Using the Proto Indo-European Root assesses the relationship with the body. Inactive Indo-European roots imply that vision as *disembodied*, disengaged, and passive, privileging a visual form of knowing related more to the mind, and a forgetting of the body. Whereas an active Indo-European root implies more embodiment, where knowledge is an active process,

that requires more bodily (bodily sense of vision) effort on the part of subjects to know. The approach leads to the development of different types of vision metaphors, that is, vision metaphors that imply a form of non-representational knowledge.

Proto Indo-European Root[136]
Es* - is, being, existing, true and real. Something experienced as existing/being.

Table 5.7 – Proto Indo-European root of vision metaphors connected to existence

5.6.5.2 ACTIVE ROOTS

The active roots are varied in nature, consisting broadly of nine categories. A few examples are given here. Vision words associated with Grasping were "Concept" (and "anticipate", whereas for exposing for example, there were "emergence" (*mezg – to dip/plunge) and "detection". These categories we were explored in more detail because they signified or suggested something about vision, as a body, and how it could be quite active and in which periods in the conceptual frameworks. Here, the categories are presented in the diagram below:
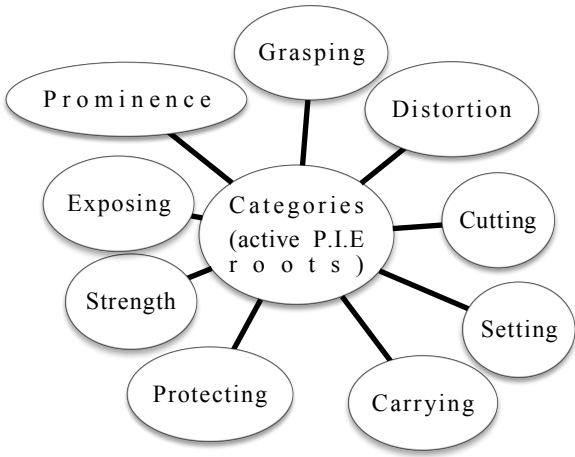

Figure 5.5 – Categories of active roots in accounting conceptual frameworks

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[136] It is recognized that representation derives from the experience of objects in space, and the body's relationship to objects as passive or active. Accounting may assume it can represent the features of objects: features that exist in or are part of objects/events. This word we felt had a closer association with disembodiment and therefore strongly associated with existence and ontology (what reality is like), and how objective something is. It was thought interesting to include this category to see how conceptual frameworks conceived of representation and what it meant, over time.

5.6.6 STEP 7 - CONCORDANCE ANALYSIS

It was considered useful to focus a little more on the context within which the submerged vision metaphor was located. A concordance line analysis is simply an investigation into the surrounding words/context that is adjacent to the word under investigation. The aim is to investigate this context in a bit more detail or depth. It is to uncover actual meanings through interpreting the meaning in conjunction with context. The interest was in discovering whether the meaning of visual metaphors altered, given the surrounding context.

5.6.7 STEP 8 - A CLOSER READING OF SUBMERGED ACTIVE AND INACTIVE ROOTS

After looking at some of the ways vision metaphors appeared, it was felt that another, deeper, close reading could be performed. A close reading of the conceptual frameworks' categories of vision metaphors could reveal some of the ways accounting conceptual frameworks altered meaning. As Lakoff and Johnson explain.

> "Embodied realism can work for science in part because it rejects a strict subject-object dichotomy. Disembodied scientific realism creates an unbridgeable ontological chasm between "objects", which are "out there", and subjectivity, which is "in here". Once the separation is made, there are only two possible and equally erroneous conceptions of objectivity: objectivity is either given by the "things in themselves" (the object) or by the inter-subjective structures of consciousness shared by all people (the subjects) …What disembodied realism (what is sometimes called metaphysical or external realism) misses is that as embodied, imaginative creatures, we never were separated or divorced from realty in the first place."

(Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p.93)

Thus, it was felt an extended analysis of objectivity could be achieved at a later date too. This was because disembodied knowledge, vision and objectivity and even truth, are connected. This was from having (a) identified vision metaphors (b) understanding that a relationship emerged between categories over time, which resulted in (c) a concordance, analysis of the vision metaphors in context. This then led to (d) a closer an in depth reading in under to understand perhaps the changing conception of knowledge in accounting conceptual frameworks too.

5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1993) conceptual metaphor methodology is explored in order to give a more embodied account of metaphor and language more generally. The notion of embodied realism/cognition or experiential realism conveys the centrality of the body as a deeply submerged conceptual metaphor in language, thought and meaning development in relation to knowledge. The body, in an ongoing interaction with its environment, has a role to play in making *meaning out of or making sense out of* the world around us. New meanings emerge through engagements with environments that engender new experiences.

Importantly, it is argued that humans dynamically engage with their worlds and this is how metaphors are produced. Collectives face *difficulties* in generating definitive terms for concepts, such as knowledge, truth and objectivity. This is especially because of a more postmodern social world. One that is more technologically sophisticated. Making images/getting to the transparency, is less a constraint as it is an opportunity offered by the world we live with. As a consequence, disembodiment of vision is appealing when everything is experienced structured, secure, formed even. Vision feels so right to communities: a metaphor of vision that is passive and empirical, is more fitting. This is because experience is so manifest, and easier to comprehend and perceive (Sweetser, 1990). However, when such experiences expire, then what is left is perhaps an attempt to *grab a*t, *to make formal*, *to wrestle with* in order to *make* literal. All in an attempt to make even the invisible (the dark) observable. But also, to alter the meaning of such concepts. As Andy Clark (see also Clark and Chambers, 1998, in their *extended mind* thesis) nicely summarizes:

> "The common upshot of all these arguments, then, is a kind of body centricism, according to which the presence of humanlike mind depends quite directly on the possession of a humanlike body."

> (Clark, 2008, p. 200)

Thus, the understanding of the metaphor approach applied in the thesis gives us much scope, it is felt, for understanding the relations between meaning and the depth to which metaphors go. Not only as vision as representational, merely passive, distant, and connected to the inner mind of reason as the acceptable path for Western modes of thought. But towards newer conceptions of vision as knowledge connected to the body, that remain unacknowledged in

the financial accounting literature: fluid, contested, contingent, and variable. Disembodied vision as knowing is one end of the spectrum.

According to thinkers such as Lakoff and Johnson and Andy Clark, among others, Evan Thompson, Bernard Andrieu, Francisco Varela, this is because of the way the world is experienced through the phenomenological perspective. Sight is privileged not only culturally (Sweetser, 1990), but through a changing collective experience of a transitioning world: how well bodies adapt to a world in transition:

> "What we need to posit conceptually in order to be realistic, that is, in order to function successfully to survive, to achieve ends, and to arrive at workable understandings of the situations we are in."

> (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p. 109)

In other words, according to Lakoff and Johnson, having sight (possessing a body that has sight) is a first requirement prior to making metaphysical claims. It may seem, without knowledge or security, that there are invariable features to be re-presented. And particular knowledge societies are presumed to fall into a despairing nihilism without evidence of this passive empirical vision as the privileged form of knowing. Through an assumed loss of visual contact with the world that is passive to the eye, is knowledge in crises? According to embodied realism, however, this is far from the case.

For Lakoff and Johnson subjects are never out of touch with their environments. The world folds in around the body. And this sense of the proximal or touch helps communities generate meaning through the lived, experiential *activity* of the body[137]. An environment that may even shape and move those subjects away from inactive visual metaphors of mirroring and reflecting to which knowledge communities are deeply connected.

Overall, it is recognized that the metaphor *Vision is Knowledge* is usually associated *Vision as Mind* (and not body). This is where the mind passively receives, reflects, mirrors, or constructs an image of the world, as it is. And this is achieved because conceptions of knowledge can be traced back to an inactive, receiving body that experiences distance from

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[137] See for example the MELC project, by Semino, Hardie, Koller, Payne, Rayson Demmen and Demjen, who have investigated metaphors such as *Battling*, *Passing away*, and *Journeys* in the context of End of Life of care. These scholars have revealed how cancer patients use experiential metaphors in order to impart their experiences of illness, emotions and relationships. It follows that conceptual metaphors come into being through an application of some form of identification of experiential or embodied mapping onto something else, something more abstract. Thus, it is important to consider the how deeply rooted experiential metaphors are in texts and speech because of the environments and contexts in which we find ourselves. Thus, the importance of the body interacting with an environment cannot be underestimated.

the world it observes. It is acknowledged that this approach may be an outcome of an academic, intellectual approach to knowing a world from a safe, intellectual distance.

This location/space of thinking, contributes to epistemological realism, according to Lakoff and Johnson. Where the intellectual may, and of course this may be unfair perhaps, merely looks at things and which regards things as presence. And does not partake in doings and activities of other practical activities. Reading and writing are largely inactive activities. It is the body, deep down, according to Lakoff and Johnson, that shapes our conceptual understandings of things: where we take our experiences, and conceptualize them in terms of metaphors of embodiment.

It is the then the aim to identify these metaphors featured in the apparent objectivity of conceptual framework language. This would then provide evidence of how objectivity and knowledge is conceived. That is, how it is conceived differently over time. As we move towards a more active eye that may struggle to look at things as a whole image, by observing them from a fixed distance, knowledge conceptions change to a more detailed inspection. This is because vision needs to change too – vision needs a body.

5.8 LIMITATIONS AND REFLECTION ON EMBODIED COGNITION METHODOLOGY

Before this chapter is finalized, some limitations of the thesis' methodology are provided. And there are some limitations to Lakoff and Johnson's methodology. Even though there are interesting points that the thesis draws from Lakoff and Johnson's theorizing, there are also some methodological limitations that can be contextualized in our study here.

First, metaphors are difficult things to define, which makes metaphors rather difficult to find (see Grady et al, 1999). For example, when considering words like "*recognition*" we can observe that most of the time the word itself is a literal part of the accountant's vocabulary: it does not feel metaphorical anymore. Accounting seems to assume that recognition is similar to the process of recognizing as a process of repeating the same outcome when faced with the same/similar event. This recognition implies a metaphor of the body, which is visual in nature, whereby we are able to recall something's features, which connects to memory and recall. If we are to understand this is a metaphor, do we ignore that the visual aspect of this word because it is part of a repetitive process that is part of the literal formation of that discourse. On the face of it, the distinction between metaphorical and literal is not entirely clear, which may be in part of what Lakoff and Johnson achieve with their collapse of literal/metaphorical boundaries.

Secondly, metaphors are difficult to identify as conceptual. That is, are they really structuring thought? To what *extent* does a novel, deliberate metaphor structure thought, and to what extent does a non-deliberate metaphor affect thought? These questions appear unanswered in Lakoff and Johnson's theorizing. Also, another question is, why are metaphors so special? What is extent to which literal language vis a vis metaphorical language affects cognition comparatively? Lakoff for example defines metaphor, in Ortony (1993),

> "A cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system", and the term "metaphorical expression" as referring to "a linguistic expression (a word, a phrase, or sentence) that is the surface realization of such a cross-domain mapping."

(Lakoff, 1993: 203)

For example, does a representational logic imply that accounting professionals are commodity fetishists that believe assets, liabilities or expenses are essentially part of the inherent nature of objects. And therefore, treat and perform objects essentially, in this way. It would appear that this is not entirely clear from the thesis that is a literal or metaphorical configuration. But it is felt that the thesis does reveal that those metaphors may indicate to the reader that a kind of idle, sedentary approach towards knowledge attainment. And that this type of metaphorical construction might prevail in accounting conceptual frameworks *at one time*.

Thirdly, Lakoff and Johnson's work is not entirely scientific as it supposes nor is it novel. Moreover, I do not agree fully with Lakoff and Johnson's views that sheer language/metaphor has the capacity to completely alter thought. This is because it may ignore myriad other factors that shape cognition, some of which are aware and some not. By radically re-ordering thought via new re-structuring of thought with new metaphors seems rather too simplistic a theory of change. And it runs centrally into the issues of postmodernity and its tendencies towards the corner of subjects and their dominating language(s).

For example, in Lakoff's *Argument is War*[138] example, it is difficult to see how a change in this metaphor could happen corresponding to ideas of intentionality. Would a change in

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[138] Lakoff and Johnson explain that there is cross mapping between one concept (war) and another (argument). The authors explain that this mapping even influences the way that argument is practiced. Lakoff and Johnson then imagines a situation in which Argument is Dance, which would imply that the practicing of arguments would change, and arguments would not be conceptualized in terms of fighting, defeating or destroying others.

metaphor radically reorder thought to radically transform social, lived conditions, if this is indeed the aim? Maybe this is one, but altogether necessary part of the story. And maybe it is a misunderstanding on my part of Lakoff and Johnson's embodied realism. However, it is read that Lakoff and Johnson suggest that the *Argument is War* conceptual metaphor is rather an outcome of the way the world is experienced, which would provide a glimpse of an externalist philosophy based on the world as guide, rather than just a coherent, internal realism based on strong relativism.

The *Argument is War* conceptual metaphor is therefore a reflection, it is felt, of how subjects commonly experience, inter-subjectively, the world around them. That therefore structures how arguing is conducted, as war-*like*. There is a truth of sorts in this metaphor; one that suggests the structure of thought is dependent of the way the world is experienced/felt. The structures and truths of our social realities are played out, perhaps, through this adversarial metaphor. The way society experiences arguments[139] is part of the belligerent, impatient and intolerant way in which the world is experienced. Perhaps, in an anxious postmodern world this is to be expected, where everything is reduced to shorter responses and justifications, to twitter-like retorts, and impatient responses.

Therefore, in my reading of Lakoff and Johnson, it is felt that these conceptual metaphors arise from an on-going transformation of space. Influence of the world on *collective* (not individual) experience, and conceptualizations of things like arguments are reciprocal. Arguments will still exist, but what they mean and how they are enacted, may change. For example, something like, *Argument is Dance,* is possible not just by altering conceptions about language and beliefs, but by altering the environments suitable, whatever these are, for those beliefs to take shape, and to correspond to them. It is interpreted that metaphors do not change through a change of the metaphorical scheme. But must coincide with the changes in the materiality of environments that makes new experiences possible. And for the outcome that new metaphors will take shape.

Lakoff and Johnson are obviously closer to those thinking within embodied cognitive or emotion theory. And so, they appear to explain that meanings are never at a standstill; that meaning and sense-making are consistently ongoing. And this is due to responses to experience, rather than arbitrarily choosing metaphors in order to re-form belief. Metaphors

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[139] It is commonplace on social media to read how someone has destroyed another's argument.

that work to order the structure of belief is partly, it is felt, unreliable if it is conceived of as a thesis that is purely on the side of the subject without considering the imposition of 'structure' on bodies (time, rules, diet, the daily commute, and so on and so forth), and their cognition affected by these constraints. Therefore, the point is that Lakoff and Johnson's work, perhaps, is not entirely scientific enough to explain if indeed the metaphor is *in* the mind (for example, a metaphor cannot be observed inherent in a neuron), and how it is exactly metaphor shapes social action or even has the capacity to change current lived condition, if indeed this is the purpose, is unsubstantiated.

Nonetheless, what is found interesting is Lakoff's similarities with those working in second generation cognitive science. The work of such authors such as Eleanor Rosch, Antonio Damasio, Evan Thompson, Francisco Varela show how knowledge may be radically re-conceived, in light of a re-understanding that knowledge does not merely derive from adequate representations built in thought; but rather, knowledge arises through biologically given sensory properties or apparatus, encountering and relating to objects/environments through those inherent body capacities (sensorimotor), that allow for certain knowledge formations to arise; that are afforded by having a body (the body-subject) to affect and to be affected.

This latter point, is all, really, that has been intended by this methodological chapter. It concedes that Lakoff and Johnson's analysis may be far from scientifically verifiable, because there still remains a lot of work to convince audiences that the work is indeed *scientific*. In spite of these criticisms, it is understood that there is something interesting to be said about their and second generation cognitive science's conceptions of knowledge: and of course, the insights derived from embodied cognition/realism generally. With new experiences, communities may value different interpretations of knowledge. And that these might be obtained through different bodily conceptualizations engendered by space, and the experiences generated from those spaces. Because of this, the way in which knowledge is obtained is from doing things, and performing activities, as opposed to just looking. The theory is it broadly anti/non-representational. Its "enactivism"[140], which explains that the body is always in constant interaction with environments and others, engenders new types of knowledge or cognition, new types of metaphor for knowledge, which is predicated on a

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[140] This term was developed by Maturana, Varela, Thomson and Rosch that approximately explains their theoretical position and which is close to Lakoff's theories on embodiment and Clark's extended mind hypothesis.

"Cartesian anxiety" (see chapter 1, Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1993). This is explored in the following results chapter.

CHAPTER 6 – RESULTS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of this chapter, the thesis' findings are revealed and discussed from the analysis of vision metaphors appearing in accounting conceptual frameworks. The discussion of results focuses on two categories of submerged vision metaphors found in the analysis of the conceptual frameworks. These categories help shape the conception of *Vision as Knowledge* in accounting conceptual frameworks. The two types or categories that are found to be submerged are of two types. And these are, inactive types (dealing with aspects of the Mind) and active types (dealing with aspects of the Body).

It is discovered that in order to examine the metaphor, *Vision is Knowledge* (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) and how this metaphor evolves, it is important to discuss both aspects of submerged vision metaphors within accounting conceptual frameworks. These metaphors are connected to a deeper, unacknowledged embodied constituent of language. Overall, since there are few instances of deliberate metaphorical use in accounting conceptual frameworks (17 instances), the focus of the chapter, for the reader's purpose, should be on the submerged, non-deliberate vision metaphors. It is because such submerged metaphorical language is more common in the context of conceptual frameworks, and which reveals the metaphoricity of taken for granted nature objective language that appears as submerged metaphorical patterns in accounting corpora.

In the previous chapter, Lakoff and Johnson's thought on embodied cognition was explored. The conceptual metaphor, *vision as objective knowledge*, is mobilized in the findings here. Lakoff and Johnson's views reveals how such a metaphor may evolve, how it may change, and what revealed meanings there are. And this is due to the way the body couples with the world. It is this coupling that causes change, not, and this is the crux, by applying to language *to* world in order to see better. Overall, what Lakoff and Johnson find is this metaphor Vision is Mental activity is not stable over a succession of years.

Just to remind the reader, the aim is to explore the conceptual metaphor, *Vision as Knowledge*. This is because *Vision as objective, scientific, value neutral knowledge* is a submerged conceptual metaphor in discourse. In other words, part of "normal" language. Its understanding is tied to the bodies we possess and the world with which we live. Overt/deliberately used conceptual metaphors are fewer in number, and are limited in this

analysis of conceptual frameworks. To re-state, the focus of this chapter, and the thesis, are the non-deliberate, submerged metaphors of vision.

How this is done is by looking at the amount of activity/inactivity found in the vision metaphor's proto language, its Indo-European root. The word's root gives an indication of how much inactivity there is, how much of the body or the mind inheres in the metaphor. For non-deliberate types the word's Indo-European root indicates more or less of the body. It is considered that if the vision metaphor's root is more inactive, then knowledge relates to a more disembodied, passive, empirical sort of knowledge, where *Vision is Mind*. If the vision metaphor's root is more active, then knowledge relates to a more embodied, active type of knowledge construction, where *Vision is Body*. And the theoretical reasons why this occurs is supplied at the end of this analysis.

Overall, the results reveal that accounting conceptual frameworks appear to conceptualize knowledge differently over time, from mind to body, and this is represented by charts in this chapter. The idea of *Vision as Knowledge* as a pre-suppositional idea of an empirical, passive, disinterested subject, eventually weakens. When for instance conceptual frameworks resort to other deeply rooted metaphorical concepts of vision, the suggestiveness of this latter conception of knowledge wanes. The main finding is that accounting knowledge is no longer conceptualized in terms sedentary, passive reflection, a kind of knowledge that relates to a corresponding mind. But accounting conceptual frameworks rather conceptualize knowledge in different ways, in terms of the lived body. The findings here suggest a much more engaged, active vision appears in frameworks, where Vision is closer to the body than the mind. This leads the thesis to a conclusion that *Vision as Knowledge* means something different in later years of framework development. Overall, the main conclusion is the conceptual metaphor *Vision as Knowledge* in accounting is not an explicitly, singular or fixed concept of accounting knowledge.

On the whole, it is interpreted that conceptual frameworks possess different senses of the *Vision as Knowledge* metaphor. It is discovered that conceptual frameworks produce newer, various conceptions of knowledge, that are different in each time frame. In a sense, it is discovered that there is a genealogically varying conception of this conceptual metaphor in accounting conceptual frameworks. Conceptual frameworks appear to side-step disembodied epistemological or philosophical flirtation with reflections and distortions. That is, vision moves towards the theorizers' embodiment. It is found that the evidence from submerged/non-deliberate vision metaphors points to doings/activities (vision is the body) rather than disengaged, passive reflection (vision is the mind).

This leads to the conclusion that a re-evaluation of vision construed as merely disembodied is required in the financial accounting literature. It is discovered that financial accounting conceptual frameworks conceptualize *vision as knowledge* in terms of praxis/doing/an aesthetic craft. The routineness of practical daily life is one part; rather than a form of knowledge that the literature commonly associates with disengagement; a peculiarly philosophical, disembodied conception of vision.

It is recognized that the more recent conceptual frameworks place a much greater emphasis on procedure. The overall finding is that *Vision as Knowledge is not definitive in accounting conceptual frameworks*. There is not some dualism of sage seer and blind fool. But rather a much more complex, series of different visions, and different knowledge constructions. In this chapter, these results of the thesis' analysis is provided and discussed.

First, some tables are presented. These tables show some basic overview of the vision metaphors studied here. The number of times the metaphor occurred in the framework is shown. And examples are provided of some the instances of the word in context of the specific conceptual framework analyzed. The analysis of course was applied to four conceptual framework periods. And, as mentioned previously, analysis was done on a period of 40 years of conceptual frameworks, spanning from 1978 to 2015 and covering US, UK and International conceptual framework history.

Overview of Conceptual Frameworks		
Total Size of Conceptual Frameworks (corpora sum total)		176,058
Size of Each Framework	FASB 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1985	81,302
	IASB 1989	10,068
	ASB 1999	34,290
	IASB 2010	18,021
	IASB ED 2015	32,377
Average size of each framework		35,211

Table 6.1 Overview of conceptual frameworks

6.1 Deliberate and Submerged Vision Metaphors

First, vision metaphors are of two types in conceptual frameworks. There are *Deliberate* and *Submerged vision metaphors*. The Deliberate category includes metaphors that are creative, imaginative or original. The Submerged or non-deliberate category include those metaphors which have now become dead, *appearing* literal or conventional in everyday language. Four important visual characteristics in conceptual frameworks were found. These characteristics connect metaphorically to *Vision as Knowledge*. In terms of the *Deliberate* and *Submerged* (please refer to table below), referring to knowledge as a type of inactive vision, this implies knowledge should be a form of passive, receiving knowledge.

Vision Metaphors	
Deliberate Vision Metaphors (Only in FASB, SFAC, No.2, 1980)	**Submerged (Non-deliberate) Vision metaphors**
Map/Mapping, Warped, Radar, Satellite…	Accounting "Recognition" and "Representation", "also objective language "Viewing, Seeing, Perspective, Appearing"

Table 6.2 – Deliberate and Submerged Vision Metaphors

Each of these had quite interesting characteristics: deliberate metaphoric language use (consciously used image-making), which, in accounting conceptual frameworks, connects to scientific instrumentation in accounting conceptual frameworks. Even though such metaphors reinforce the notion of de-personalized empirical observation, they are unique, spoken mostly by David Solomons, and are fewer in number. Everyday conventional/conceptual or submerged vision metaphors ("I see", "our view is…", "our perspective is that…") refer, also, to the basic, primary metaphor, *Vision is Knowledge*. The presence of submerged, non-deliberate vision metaphors highlights the extent to which vision pervades everyday "normal" language, suggesting how the sense of vision is deeply rooted in thoughts about knowing and understanding. Significantly, submerged vision metaphor is the thesis main focus' because they exhibit a sense of objectivity and neutrality; partly based on a more basic submerged, conceptual metaphor *Vision is Knowledge*. This,

too, is similar for deliberate metaphors that also linked to the same conventionalized conceptual metaphor *Vision is Knowledge*. In other words, deliberate and submerged metaphors refer to the same conceptual metaphor, *Vision is Knowledge,* however, deliberate metaphors are an outcome of David Solomons' voice. A brief excursion into these deliberately used metaphors is given below, before moving onto the more submerged vision metaphors thereafter.

6.2 DELIBERATE METAPHORS

Imagery is (*Imeto*) or copying – provides vision in the sense of showing that two disconnected things can be brought together so that we can see the comparison between two, perhaps, different objects, events or states.

Deliberate Visual Imagery:

Source Domain – *Visual Instrument* ——————————→ Target Domain – *Accounting*

Figure 6.1 – Source and Target Domains

David Solomon made use of a few overt metaphors relating to visual instrumentation, making comparisons between accounting report and visual devices. Perhaps bringing together a new way of seeing accounting reporting that initially is viewed as anomalous (Tinker, 1986). One interesting trope David Solomons makes is the comparison between accounting and cartography.

With deliberate metaphors, one is breaking the rules of normal acceptable literal to make a metaphorical statement. And this is in order to provide more conscious metaphorical uses, usually "for their unique, didactic qualities and sometimes deliberate beauty" (Gibbs, 2017 p. 83).

- Deliberate = Metaphors that are literary or creative that intimate vision. For example, *Accounting* is a *Map*, which be found only in FASB's SFAC No. 2 Statement is one, as well as some others, which are shown in the following table (Table 6.3).

FASB – Imagery	Examples
Mapping/Cartography	A map represents the geographical features of the mapped area by using symbols bearing no resemblance to the actual countryside, yet they communicate a great deal of information about it. The captions and numbers in financial statements present a " picture " of a business enterprise and many of its external and internal relationships more rigorously more informatively, in fact than a simple description of it
Mirroring /speakers	Just as a distorting mirror reflects a warped image of the person standing in front of it or just as an inexpensive loudspeaker fails to reproduce faithfully the sounds that went into the microphone or onto the phonograph records, so a bad model gives a distorted representation of the system that it models
Barometers	Reliability as a quality of a predictor has a somewhat different meaning from reliability as a quality of a measure. The reliability of a barometer should be judged in terms of the accuracy with which it measures air pressure and changes in air pressure. That is all that a barometer is constructed to do. Yet questions about its reliability are more likely to be couched in terms of its accuracy as a predictor of the weather, even though weather conditions in any location are the result of many factors besides air pressure in that location.
Wristwatch	To be relevant, information must have one of them or both, and it must be timely…A clearer distinction is now drawn between the degree of reliability that can be achieved in a particular situation and the perceived need for more reliability or less. In terms of the chronometer-wristwatch analogy in paragraph 73, the wristwatch is not as reliable a timekeeper as the chronometer. It does not need to be. It is the perceived need for reliability that is different because of the different uses to which the two instruments are put.
Satellite	New kinds of information have become available, and with greater speed than was previously possible. To the simple sources of information available to our ancestors have been added satellite photographs, radar, and radiosondes to give information about the upper atmosphere. New information makes possible more sophisticated predictive models. When a meteorologist selects from among the alternative

	sources of information and methods of gathering information about existing conditions, since future conditions cannot be known those sources and methods that have the greatest predictive value can be expected to be favoured.
Meteorology	To the simple sources of information available to our ancestors have been added satellite photographs, radar, and radiosondes to give information about the upper atmosphere. New information makes possible more sophisticated predictive models. When a meteorologist selects from among the alternative sources of information and methods of gathering information about existing conditions, since future conditions cannot be known those sources and methods that have the greatest predictive value can be expected to be favoured.
Radar	Success in forecasting the weather has increased as new methods of gathering information have been developed. New kinds of information have become available, and with greater speed than was previously possible. To the simple sources of information available to our ancestors have been added satellite photographs, radar, and radiosondes to give information about the upper atmosphere
Evaporate	Clearly, there are degrees of timeliness. In some situations, the capacity of information to influence decisions may evaporate quickly, as, for example, in a fast-moving situation such as a take-over bid or a strike, so that timeliness may have to be measured in days or perhaps hours.

Table 6.3 – Deliberate Metaphors in accounting conceptual frameworks

Deliberate vision metaphors appeared only in FASB's conceptual frameworks [all in the SFAC No. 2 Qualitative Characteristics Statement (1980)]. These metaphors are associated more commonly with scientific measurement. And the body here should be non-interfering in the process of knowing. For empirical measurement, the by-standing researcher (Benschop, 1998) should remove the body. The use of scientific instrumentation is used in the processing of knowledge[141]:

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[141] These are sometimes quite specific knowledge formations (mind/theoretical v body/praxis). We form knowledge traditionally because of the way we experience the world as visually clear. Certain forms of knowledge depend on location of the body in space, however. Sitting, staring, reading, observing at a distance from events, at a desk (as intellectuals do) are still situated knowledges. That is, we feel like we gain knowledge of things when we adopt such a position. Usually regulated by the body's spatial relationship to the world around

"An analogy with cartography has been used to convey some of the characteristics of financial reporting, and it may be useful here. A map represents the geographical features of the mapped area by using symbols bearing no resemblance to the actual countryside, yet they communicate a great deal of information about it. The captions and numbers in financial statements present a "picture" of a business enterprise and many of its external and internal relationships more rigorously more informatively, in fact than a simple description of it."

(FASB, 1980, para. 27)

Therefore, it is discovered that visual imagery, intentional image or evocative metaphor, is interesting to look at initially. This was because as an aspect of inactive (disembodied, empirical) vision in accounting conceptual frameworks, creative, ideal scientific metaphors emphasize the approach towards the attainment of knowledge, as receptive, sedentary, and disembodied. But this was entirely clear. It is understood, therefore, that visual references to mirror, would imply, a much greater de-emphasis on the body and more on the mind which would be applied in a deeper, more grounded manner.

Moreover, explicit imagery referring to Vision as Knowledge is prevalent *only* in FASB, and are only present in the SFAC No.2 Qualitative Characteristics statement. Here, the number of references to devices indicates how conceptual framework writers of the time, namely David Solomons, thought about corporate reporting at that time. What the conceptual framework appeared to achieve, in connecting accountants with a sort of *inactive* lived body, was to compare accountants with that of scientists, and their knowledge of the world is privileged through the mind, disconnected from the body. The accountant is presumed to reflect economic realities neutrally, to be guided by the way the world appears. And that the accountant's body and its practices, should be removed from interfering with the transparent reporting of financial information. As Benschop (1998) writes, the very same thing occurred in late 19th century science:

"Late nineteenth-century science thus counters the subversive subjective influences — which are increasingly recognized as corrupting scientific integrity — by the production of numbers, the severe self-discipline of the researchers, and the dependable regularity of the scientific instruments."

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it. And this is because the world feels that way to us in relation to the body's position to its environment (sitting in an office space reading = visual, intellectual knowledge). As a social collective, it feels safe (visual) or less safe (less visual/can't see what is going on).

(Benschop, 1998, p. 25)

Yet other frameworks have a deliberately more formal tone. The International Accounting Standard Board's (IASB) previous 1989 framework makes no use of any deliberate, overt or creatively used metaphor at all. The Accounting Standard Board's framework published in 1999 makes use of very simple vision metaphors such as "fade" or perhaps "frame", and "latent". These however that are not really very novel or original. Yet the sheer lack of imagery appears to emphasize much greater organization and coordination on behalf of the IASB 1989. The IASB 1989 focuses more on the structural aspects, as it follows on from the previous FASB effort, in order, it seems, to appear more structurally realistic in its tendency towards enduring economic qualities. There are no clear examples of imagery in the IASB 1989; it is much more structured and formal in tone. The findings point out that FASB makes more frequent use of image making, showing that this conceptual framework tends towards describing through an under-simplification, rather than through the reductive oversimplification of the more literal international framework.

For deliberate image making, therefore, what is most striking is the overt use of metaphors in SFAC No. 2 Qualitative characteristics statement of FASB. The IASB 1989 makes no use of any creative, novel metaphor. Imagery shows how representation, mirroring and science add to the objectivist realism concerning a dated dualistic cognitivism that accounting conceptual frameworks initially endorse. These metaphors are interpreted as meaningful only in so far as financial accounting is a representational form of knowledge that provides a neutral natural language that maps, models or projects; one in which knowledge occurs when our theories "fit the objective facts of the world" (Lakoff, 1987, p. 297). This objectivism hints at the importance cerebral mapping and the computational power of brain processes, commensurate with the foregrounding of an internal representational, computational view of brain vis a vis matter. And this is in spite of our witnessing of the nascent post-human era, and the attentiveness to the material inter-relation between bodies and worlds. Visual imagery portrays how and in what ways accounting regulators should think about being (reality as still/passive) and epistemology (how accounting addresses and comes to know the passivity of the world). Phenomena are known through inactive (not enactive) and reflective approaches that require literal, reductive, minimal description.

Regulators initially present a confident range of images of financial accounting as a functional instrument detailing a transparent world through its content as a 'truth telling lens' (Amernic and Craig, 2009, see also Craig and Amernic, 2004). And FASB does this with intent, making deliberate use of scientific instrumentation as metaphors of basic-level

perception in financial reports. Yet, these deliberate metaphors are never present in later frameworks. This seems little surprising since over time the lack of deliberate metaphors indicates that accounting/accountant is to be responsible for the successful application of accounting rules. The accountant should send out a message of passivity, receptivity and disembodiment as a form of realism that impresses on readers how accounting gains knowledge of economic transactions and events according to formal rules. Yet examples of deliberate metaphor are so few in number that they evidence mainly David Solomons' understanding of accounting knowledge, who performed a significant role in the development of the earlier U.S framework. The results from these inactive submerged vision metaphors that inform knowledge is identified in the subsequent conceptual framework periods, that are now explained in the following section.

6.3 SUBMERGED VISION METAPHORS: ACTIVE AND INACTIVE TYPES

Submerged categories were outcomes of the initial etymological analysis. Secondly, the submerged categories were examined in order to decide how much activity or inactivity was present in the metaphors studied. Submerged metaphors had a closer association with the body than first anticipated. In that (a) the body was either active in seeing or (b) it was inactive, which was classified in accordance with the vision metaphor's root. In other words, these metaphors were traced back using the word's ancestral or primitive root (Proto-Indo European Root or P.I.E), it was observed that these vision metaphors had a stronger association with a more sedentary bodily state, and its relationship with objects implied little if any human activity in knowledge formation. That is, the activity of the body is featured less when we compare the word with its P.I.E root in these certain instances, and therefore is often connected with aspects of the disembodied form of vision rather than the more localized, situated one. To give an example, the word insight's root was "weid" – meaning *to see,* and so the root more deliberately emphasizes this inactivity of body. The association with felt experience of passive, empirical observation in the conceptualization of knowledge. In order to remain somewhat objective in our selection of vision metaphors, it was decided to examine those metaphors that had a much closer association with the word's PIE root that evidenced an association with both active *and* inactive roots.

Since inactive vision metaphors have a closer association with a kind of disembodiment, that is a lack of bodily activity, the correlation between such metaphors and assumptions about knowledge reveal the presence of an inactive, receptive intellectual form of knowledge. Knowledge that derives from passive viewership, which is associated with more inactive

activities, such as reading and writing, which visual perception offers, as an inactive or passive sort of experience that is felt or experienced as disembodied. A position which assumes presence/foregrounding of the world.

For the inactive, intellectual types, three were identified:

- First, those vision metaphors whose Indo-European root associated with passive spectatorship, that is, empirical observation (*weid).
- Second, those vision metaphors that whose Indo-European root was related to passive knowing (*gno).
- And third, those vision metaphors which had an Indo-European root of existing (*es)[142], relating to concepts of ontology or discourses on how/what things exist.

These types indicate a form of perceptual knowing that is non-active, associated with a receptive and representational form of knowing. Whereas other vision metaphors had a root in greater embodiment/physical activity (please refer to section 6.5 below).

6.4 SUBMERGED INACTIVE VISION METAPHORS

6.4.1 INDO EUROPEAN ROOT = OBSERVATION/OBSERVING

The submerged vision metaphor refers to the normal, everyday use of vision words that speak of knowledge. That is, those that refer to knowledge in some, almost, unconscious way. Examples such as, "I *see*" or "my *view* is…" or "I share your *perspectiv*e" are part of everyday speech. These types of metaphor, unintentional as they are, are still metaphors because they fall under a broader conceptual metaphor: "*Seeing is Understanding*" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, p. 48). Moreover, as Sweetser (1990) explains, sight (a body metaphor) is conventionally associated with conceptions of the mind, with objective, theoretical knowledge. This is because sight *feels like* full knowledge has been obtained[143]. Whereas smell, touch and taste are usually associated with personal, emotive or mawkish expression, touch or blindness for example is more subjective than sight is, detracting from what true,

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[142] Knowing and existing are interpreted as more inactive approaches, as opposed to active approaches. From the roots, it is found that recognition for example is an important metaphor for accounting, and this is associated with memory work and not physical work, as in hard physical labor. Existing is associated with representation which implies a kind of re-presentation in the mind through looking and observing things.

[143] Thus, society sacrifices the visceral, bodily activity in of meaning. Society trades these in over time. And they begin to mean something more banal, conventional. Conventional metaphors become part of ordinary thought. Yet, as Lakoff and Johnson assert, "not all conceptual metaphors are manifested in…words…some are manifested in grammar, others in gesture, art or ritual" (Lakoff, and Johnson, 1980). Actually, metaphors may disappear, becoming more lodged in the *actions* of individuals anyway. That is, the novel metaphor and the conventional metaphor may be semantically tied, where one is expressed metaphorically, and the other simply automatic, less colourfully expressed.

objective knowledge is. Sight has characteristics of being objective, transparent, even fair, in accounting policy.

> "Financial statements are frequently described as showing a **true and fair view** of or as presenting **fairly**, the financial position, performance and changes in financial position of an entity. Although this Framework does not deal directly with such concepts, the application of the principal qualitative characteristics and of appropriate accounting standards normally results in financial statements that convey what is generally understood as a true and fair view of, or as presenting fairly such information."

> (IASB, 1989, para 46)

Rooted visual imagery is more common. And this is because according to Sweetser (1990) vision serves as a model for what is objective knowledge and also, what is acceptable to community thought. Anything that does not hit the mark of empirical, scientific observation, is tantamount to misunderstanding.

These three main categories are most strongly connected to this absolute, inactive vision metaphor for knowledge in conceptual frameworks. And that they also form a large part of the vocabulary of accounting conceptual frameworks is considered significant. This is because they are visually related words that have a stronger association with bodily *inactivity,* present in the background of the word's Proto Indo-European Root. They have a root connected to inactivity in the body: observing things, knowing things and, how things exist, in so far as they do exist, within the world. These are more connected to intellectual activity, rather than more active categories, which implies an element of work, of effort, of doing things, or perhaps, practical know how.

These types of metaphors are submerged and inactive vision metaphors. They are grouped into two main domains: *a)* what we may broadly call a knowledge category, and *b)* the domain dealing with existence, what is considered to be an existence/ontological category. These are included because accounting conceptual frameworks communicate through these categories overall. So why existence? Firstly, there is an appreciation that something exists in a certain way, that therefore needs to be re-presented in the accounting statement, and second, if something does exist, there is an implication that knowledge claim in made about what exists through that mode (seeing) of knowing.

Therefore, in a visual, representational sense of knowledge, the accountant mirrors or reflects what economic qualities exists. The accounting then re-builds those as accurately as possible in the accounting information for investors, lenders and creditors, hence producing knowledge. Therefore, conceptual frameworks attempt to communicate that knowledge is visual: a mirror image of what exists as fully transparent. It is found that knowledge and existence categories are important to study because it provides insights into the conceptualization of knowledge that appears in accounting conceptual frameworks.

6.4.2 INDO EUROPEAN ROOT: RECOGNITION = KNOWLEDGE (EPISTEMOLOGY)

Giles Deleuze observed, in *Repetition in Difference*, published in 1968, that recognition is an encounter with the already familiar[144]:

> "Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of **recognition** but of a fundamental encounter. What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In which tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed."
>
> (Deleuze, 1994, p. 139).

For Deleuze, recognition is an act of knowing. Yet recognition implies knowing again. Recognition is the noticing of similar features, and qualities, again and again.

In the IASB 2010, recognition is defined as the following:

> "Recognition is the process of incorporating in the balance sheet or income statement an item that meets the definition of an element and satisfies the criteria for recognition…. It involves the depiction of the item in words and by a monetary amount and the inclusion of that amount in the balance sheet or income statement totals."
>
> (IASB, 2010, para, 4.37)

Recognition refers to an interpretation, and comprehension through re-knowing. The operation of recognition are products of seeing, and seeing again repetitively. The

---

[144] Recognition, strangely enough, prevents new forms of thinking, and how, in accounting, this is done through a system: "Something in the world **forces** us to think. This something is an object not of **recognition** but of a fundamental encounter. What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In which tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed." (Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 1994, originally published 1968, p. 139).

importance of recognition raises the possibility that conceptual frameworks re-know the familiar through identification of qualitative features. And by re-knowing the same object, it is hypothesized that conceptual frameworks find difficulty re-knowing that economic object again, in the most recent IASB frameworks. The IASB develops the capacity of accounts to know within its system of existing conceptual accounting system. The focus of the IASB is to capture within its existing structure; where past events resemble one another, and therefore captured under existing concepts.

6.4.3 INDO EUROPEAN ROOT: REPRESENTATION = EXISTENCE (OBJECT-IVITY)

Representational thinking considers the way in which knowledge is attained through aligning models to states of affairs' key features (economic features). Language from FASB, for example, states:

> "Representational faithfulness, on the other hand, refers to the correspondence or agreement between the accounting numbers and the resources or events those numbers purport to represent."[145]

> (SFAC, No. 2, 1980, p. 6)

This links with a correspondence theory of meaning, truth and knowledge that suggests objectivity derives from a faithful representation between accounting numbers and the resources or events those numbers purport to represent. According to such an assumption, conceptual systems such as accounting correspond to entities in that are given in the pre-structured world.

6.5 SUBMERGED ACTIVE VISION METAPHORS

Active metaphors indicate different modes of visual perception. Active vision metaphors are considered to be less related to a seeing, which is associated more with the mind that mirrors; the Cartesian substance dualism between the mind and the body. Proto language demonstrates the latency of the body in vision metaphors. Here, the body is a metaphor for the functional/operational eye. Passive reception of information is tied more to inactivity in the body, to knowledge as representational. This is where the intellect receives information which passes *through* the eye. Overall, it is discovered that knowledge is not vision in the

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[145] Yet, today: "Many accounting signs no longer refer to real objects and events and accounting no longer functions according to the logic of transparent representation…" (Macintosh, et al, 2002, p.13).

sense of being a metaphor for that of the inner mind. Whereas categories (shown in figure 6.1 below) evidence much greater use of *embodiment* it is assumed that the world must be apprehended with an investigative eye that has to *operate*; that is more functional in terms of seeing *with*. The active categories signify that the eye is not a metaphor for the mirroring mind. Instead, the eye is neither passive or disengaged, but rather functional; the eye is a metaphor for the active, moving body.

The changing nature of vision is integral to the thesis' understanding of vision metaphor. *Vision as Knowledge* alters to something more functional. The active body resides within the meaning of accounting knowledge. Knowledge is neither passive nor disembodied inactive seeing, but rather, is active, alive, the reliability of the perception of two eyes. Receiving information without distortion is closer to, "monologic, epistemic truth over mere opinion or *doxa*" (Jay, 1994, p 26). These active metaphors indicate much more activity of the body in the construction of accounting knowledge, which demonstrates the change from *seeing through* to *seeing with*. Figure below (6.1) illustrates the different types of active roots in the submerged vision metaphors of the conceptual frameworks.
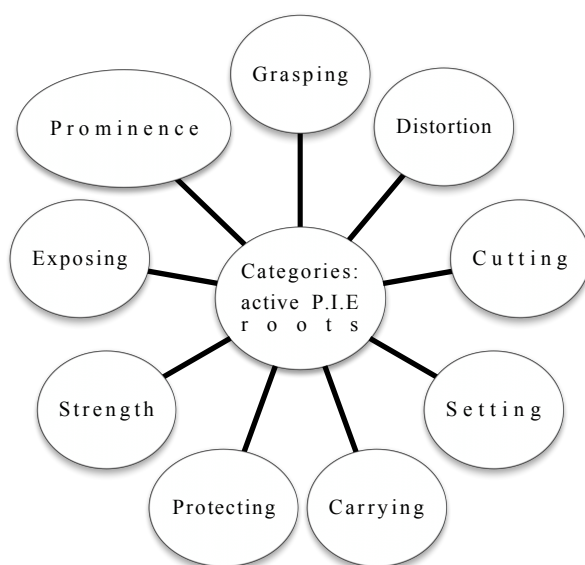

Figure 6.1 – Active vision metaphor Proto Indo-European root categories

Active categories, above, represent commonly used vision metaphors in accounting conceptual frameworks. These metaphors' Proto Indo- European roots evidence more activity. They are associated with the following category:

1) Submerged vision metaphors in accounting Conceptual frameworks: Grasping, Moving, Distorting, Prominence/making salient, Exposing, Showing Strength, Setting, Carrying and Protecting.

The active sub-categories are now explained in a little more detail. Results are provided in the following section. As mentioned previously, there are two broad types of vision metaphors: deliberate vision metaphors and submerged vision metaphors.

Active vision roots indicate that seeing is much more active. The result is that vision is more an active concept in the construction of accounting knowledge, indicating something of a retraction from the gazing, observing and picturing predecessor. Here there is evidence of a more mobile sort of visual knowing that appears as a functional replacement. And how this eye constructs the concept of knowledge is important for considering Vision's manifoldness. For example, "Cutting" metaphors are linked to vision in a particularly specific sense: that the eyes are set to work in sense making. For instance, such words, such as, "investigate", share a root that is related to the movement of/in the body. The active root indicates that there is some element of handling involved, where what is looked is effectively torn into shreds. In addition, it is difficult to ignore that roots such as "*Grasping*" are connected to embodied concepts of touching, feeling and handling. The eye in these cases is somewhat opposed to gaze, and most of the time is this so. Gazing, for example, requires a fixed sort visual stance towards another where the viewer is concentrating that gaze on some other and transmitting it clearly to the mind. Below in table 6.4, for example, there are shown to be varied examples of active vision metaphors' Indo-European roots, from the Financial Accounting Standard Board's early conceptual framework.

FASB	Examples	Count	P.I.E root	Meaning
Cutting	Describe/Description	125	*Skribh	to cut
	Contemplate	4	*tem	to cut /cut out a space
	Investigate/Investigation	5	*skreu	to cut:/tear into shreds
	Focus/Focusing PHD	5	*kent	to prick - sharpness,
	Picture	3	*peig	to cut/mark by incision
	Analysis/Analysts/Analyze	10	*leu	to loosen/divide/cut

	Distinguish	9	*steig	to prick, stick, pierce
	Screen/Screens	2	*sker-(1)	to cut
	Extinguish	1	*steig-	to prick, stick, pierce
	Depict	7	*peik	to cut, mark,
	Omit/Omission	20	*m(e)ith-	to exchange, remove
	total	191		
Grasping	Concept/Conceptual	74	*kap	to grasp
	Perceive/Perceptible	15	*kap	to grasp
	Audience	1	au-dh	to physically grasp
	Anticipate	8	*kap	to grasp
	Surreptitious	1	*rep-	to snatch
	Total	99		

Table 6.4 – Example of submerged vision metaphors and attached roots

6.6 ACTIVE AND INACTIVE SUBMERGED VISION METAPHORS

Both active and inactive roots show how knowledge is conceptualized; mainly as different or alternative types. One in terms of deliberate metaphors, and one in terms submerged (non-deliberate) vision metaphors. But there are many variations to passive perceptual modality of sight. Creative metaphors are used deliberately *but also* inactive, referring to scientific measuring or detection devices, such as barometers and radars. But for non-deliberate, submerged, even mundane vision metaphors, these are deep-rooted in everyday language, and can appear as both active or inactive.

Chart 6.1 on the next page shows the overall frequencies of the distribution of inactive and active non-deliberate or submerged vision metaphors over the period studied, revealing that there is an increase in the cluster of active vision metaphors over time.
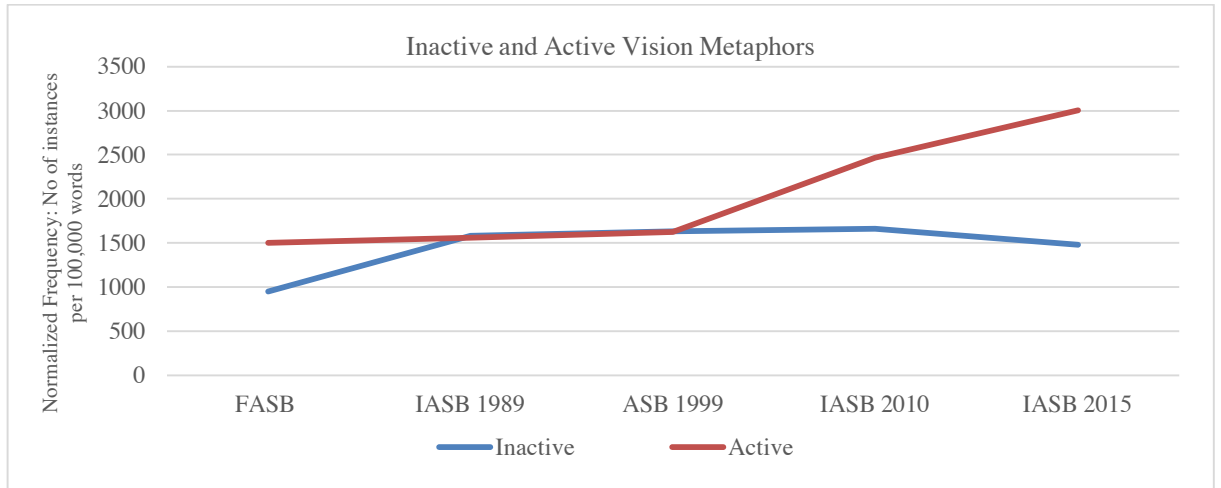
Chart 6.1 – Normalized frequency of Inactive and Active Vision Metaphors

6.6.1 ACTIVE AND INACTIVE INDO-EUROPEAN ROOTS

The table below reveals each of the roots found in the conceptual frameworks studied. They appear as active and inactive roots. Observing, knowing and existing are inactive (italicized); the roots thereafter are active.

	FASB 78 -85	**IASB 1989**	**ASB 1999**	**IASB 2010**	**IASB 2015**
Observing	260.756193	397.2983711	565.762613	488.3191832	407.6968218
Knowing	436.643625	804.5292014	609.5071449	427.2792853	484.912129
Existing	253.3763007	377.4334525	454.9431321	743.576938	589.9249467
Cutting	234.9265701	178.784267	291.6302129	305.1994895	685.6719276
Grasping	107.0084377	288.041319	119.5683873	160.9233672	117.3672669
Protecting	44.27935352	0	5.832604258	49.94173464	40.15195972
Placing	293.9657081	79.45967422	125.4009915	277.4540813	194.582574
Moving	451.4034095	486.6905046	434.5290172	771.3223462	710.3808259
Show strength	67.64901232	238.3790226	253.7182852	355.1412241	268.7092689
Concealing	71.33895845	19.86491855	46.66083406	94.33438766	33.97473515
Prominence	159.8976655	218.5141041	180.810732	349.5921425	775.2416839
Distorting	75.02890458	49.66229638	166.2292213	99.88346929	179.1395126

Table 6.4 – Inactive and Active Proto Indo-European root over time period

As far as (submerged) non-deliberate active roots and inactive roots are concerned, an overall increasing trend is observed. The trend is towards more active vision metaphors. And this is

especially evident after the ASB 1999 Statement of Principles. In FASB, the inactive metaphors begin fairly low on the graph, but begin to tail off again approaching the International Accounting Standard Board's 2015 Exposure Draft. In terms of inactive vision, (highlighted in bold in the table above) there is a trend upwards towards the UK's Statement of Principles in 1999, and then gradually trends downwards thereafter. The main difference is that subsequent to the Accounting Standard Board's statement of principles there is a marked increase in active vision metaphors.

6.6.2 OVERALL: THE TRANSITION IN SUBMERGED ACTIVE METAPHORS

Below the chart reveals the transition of active vision metaphors. The graph represents a map of the upward trend in the frequency of active vision metaphor diachronically. It provides a way of illustrating how the conceptual framework's conceptual metaphor *Vision as Knowledge* is much broader than the assumption of passivity, separation and representation. The metaphor's developing meaning (which is elaborated in more detail later in the chapter) evidences here a much more fluid meaning, where active concepts of vision are on the rise.
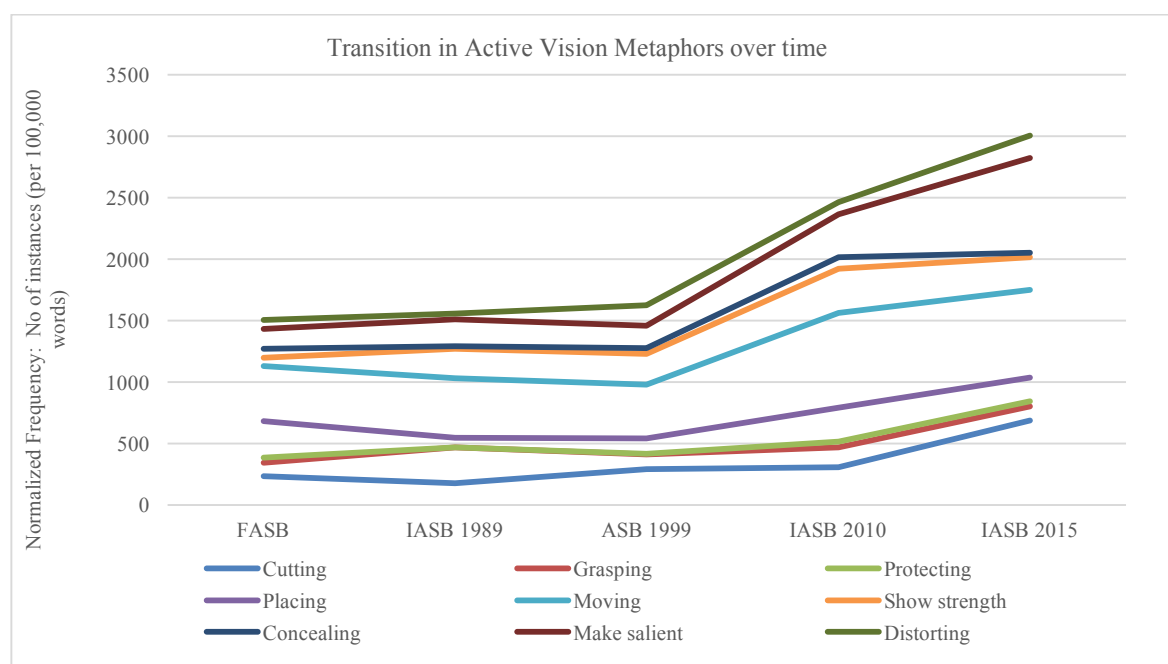

Chart 6.2 – Normalized frequency of trend in Active Vision metaphors over time

Table 6.5 below reveals the various active categories. The increased frequency serves to show how the concept of knowledge attached to the empirically detached subject (that suppresses subjective opinion in attainment of knowledge) disappears. In view of this, the conceptual metaphor *Vision as Knowledge*, typically reflects this notion: the idea of dispassionate viewing subject who views the world from a value free, indifferent, and,

significantly inactive, passive standpoint, dissipates over time. The results indicate a perhaps non-conventionalized type of knowing. Not vision as a metaphorically passive knowing, but of a much more diverse, and reformulated metaphor, from the mind to the body. Over time, there are different conceptualizations of *Vision as Knowledge*: a re-thinking of the concept of *Vision as Knowledge* in accounting conceptual frameworks is observed.

6.6.3 ACTIVE VISION CATEGORIES

Active Vision	FASB 78- 85	IASB 1989	ASB 1999	IASB 2010	IASB 2015
Cutting	234.9265701	178.784267	291.6302129	305.1994895	685.6719276
Grasping	107.0084377	288.041319	119.5683873	160.9233672	117.3672669
Protecting	44.27935352	0	5.832604258	49.94173464	40.15195972
Placing	293.9657081	79.45967422	125.4009915	277.4540813	194.582574
Moving	451.4034095	486.6905046	434.5290172	771.3223462	710.3808259
Show strength	67.64901232	238.3790226	253.7182852	355.1412241	268.7092689
Concealing	71.33895845	19.86491855	46.66083406	94.33438766	33.97473515
Prominent/Salient	159.8976655	218.5141041	180.810732	349.5921425	775.2416839
Distorting	75.02890458	49.66229638	166.2292213	99.88346929	179.1395126

Table 6.5 – Active Vision Categories

For active categories, as shown above in the graph above, there is an emphasis on the general movement towards *cutting*. This takes place after IASB 2010 (associated with de*scribing*, for example). This is shown by a movement towards more activity. After FASB (1980, SFAC, No. 2 Statement), an increase in most active categories takes place, most notably *Grasping*, and the *Prominent/Make Salient*. These types are linked to "perceive" and "anticipation", whereas for *Prominent* (or standing out), examples including "apparent" and "illustration", there are greater increases. The *Concealing* active category increases also, whereas "*moving*" cluster is generally constant. However, this category declines until the ASB 1999, at which point it drastically increases in frequency. This category includes metaphors such as, "objectives", "forthcoming", "seeking" and "examine" as well as "signs" and "exploration". What is perhaps interesting, is the large increase in these metaphors in the ASB 1999 Statement of Principles. It is observed for example that the active category "*concealing*", which includes metaphors such as, "exposure", "emergence" or "discovery" increases in frequency. Furthermore, all categories apart from *Cutting*, which includes examples such as "describe", "depiction" and "delineate", reveal that the normalized

frequency of these active categories increases in the most recent Exposure Draft. After the IASB 2010 framework, the *Cutting* category of vision increases substantially, where "describe", in particular, is used 165 times. In conjunction with this, it is observed that the *Concealing*, and *Showing Strength* categories decrease in frequency after IASB 2010. Overall, what this represents is that the conceptual framework conception of *vision as knowledge* is variable over time; that is, conceptual frameworks do not represent the conception of knowledge as repetitive.

6.7 FASB 78-85 - IASB 1989: MOVING AWAY FROM VISION

From chart two above, some categories remain constant: *Distortion* type active vision metaphors that decrease in frequency are *placing* and *moving***.** In FASB, for example, moving type vision metaphors, appear 367 times, as compared with the IASB, which has a much smaller number of 49 instances. FASB is a substantially larger document, covering some 81302 words, in comparison to the IASB which has a much smaller frequency of 10068 words. FASB uses a lot of different vision metaphors, for example: "examples", "empirics", "seeking", and also "exaggerating". The IASB 1989 is slightly more constrained in this respect. And variation in vision metaphor category is much smaller. The IASB talk of "difference", "seeking", and the "objectives" it would like to achieve. It is discovered that the *Cutting* category decreases in frequency, and thereafter increases, tails off, and then increases again. Certain categories show an increasing trend towards the IASB 1989, *Protection* and *Prominent/Salient*, whereas *Placing*, and *Cutting* categories decrease.

6.7.1 FROM FASB 78-85 - IASB 1989

Table 6.6	Decline in Active Roots FASB – IASB 1989
	Examples
Placing	**Verification** = The reliability of a measure rests on the faithfulness with which it represents what it purports to represent, coupled with an assurance for the user, which comes through verification that it has that representational quality.
	Display = Definition, recognition, measurement, and display are separate in the Board's conceptual framework.
	Discern = The presence or absence of future economic benefit that can be obtained and controlled by the enterprise or of the enterprise 's legal, equitable, or constructive obligation to sacrifice assets in the

	future can often be discerned reliably only with hindsight
Cutting	**Describe** = Rather, Statements in this series describe concepts and relations that will underlie future financial accounting standards and practices and in due course serve as a basis for evaluating existing standards and practices.

Table 6.6.1	**Increase in active roots from FASB – IASB 1989**
	Examples
Prominence	**Indicate =** Such classifications can be relevant to the decision-making needs of the users of financial statements when they indicate legal or other restrictions on the ability of the entity to distribute or otherwise apply its equity. **Predict =** Information about the economic resources controlled by the entity and its capacity in the past to modify these resources is useful in predicting the ability of the entity to generate cash and cash equivalents in the future. Information about financial structure is useful in predicting future borrowing needs and how future profits and cash flows will be distributed among those with an interest in the entity; it is also useful in predicting how successful the entity is likely to be in raising further finance.

Categories that decline (placing the eye, the eye cutting things, and so) contrast with categories that increase in frequency (eye picking on things in financial statements), respectively moving towards the IASB 1989. *Prediction*, for example, suggests a forward-looking eye. FASB places emphasis on placing the eye. For example, verification, or displaying and discerning as metaphors of knowledge reflects a world in which perseverance is a quality to maximize knowledge as a social activity. These categories begin to decline in the IASB 1989, whereas *Prominence/Make Salient* categories, particularly *indicate* and *prediction* references increase. There is a slight decline in *Placing* vision metaphors, such as placing the eye on things, or resting the eye in order to "display" for a user. So that the user also can place their eyes *onto* elements of financial statements. This is suggestive of financial statements as unchangeable or coherent documents which require consistent presentation of information. What increases as a result is *Prominence/Salience* and *Protection* categories in the IASB 1989, where *Indicating*, and *Predicting* are important instances. This suggests that

the eye is to select things that stand out, to focus on those elements. That there is stability in the organization of the accounting information is a key concern. This also relates somewhat to the inactive excessive focus on accounting concepts such as "*recognition*" where the eye is to pick out features that are familiar to it. This signals a move away from representation as a model for accounting which is replaced for a model of accounting recognition – accounting rules.

6.7.2 MOVEMENT FROM IASB 1989 – ASB 1999

Table 6.6.2	Decline in Active Roots from IASB 1989 – ASB 1999
	Examples
Prominence	Consider -When distinguishing between items in this way consideration needs to be given to the nature of the entity and its operations. **Apparent** = The substance of transactions or other events is not always consistent with that which is apparent from their legal or contrived form.
Conceal	**Hidden** - However, the exercise of prudence does not allow, for example, the creation of hidden reserves or excessive provisions, the deliberate understatement of assets or income, or the deliberate overstatement of liabilities or expenses, because the financial statements would not be neutral and, therefore , not have the quality of reliability.
Moving	**Seek** - The concept of capital maintenance is concerned with how an entity defines the capital that it seeks to maintain.

Table 6.6.3	Increase from IASB 1989 – ASB 1999
	Examples
Cutting	**Extinguished** - The term derecognised is used in the Statement to mean that an item ceases to be recognised. To simplify the text, the word eliminated is used in this chapter in place of the phrase consumed, transferred, disposed of , expired , settled or extinguished **Circumscribing** - It is important that entities that ought to prepare and publish financial statements do, in fact, do so and that those financial statements report on all relevant activities and resources. This chapter focuses on

| | these issues in other words, on identifying and circumscribing the reporting entity.

Delineate = Information on the reporting entity's financial position therefore needs to be presented in a way that focuses attention on these aspects. Good presentation typically involves: (a) recognising only assets , liabilities and ownership interest in the balance sheet; (b) delineating the entity's resource structure (major classes and amounts of assets) and its financial structure (major classes and amounts of liabilities and ownership interest) |
|---|---|

The UK Accounting Standards Board increases metaphors of vision, mainly in relation to the Proto Indo-European category of *Cutting*. "Extinguish", "circumscribe" and "delineate" are key examples. Such instances draw attention to discovery over creation. The use of the term "extinguish" suggests the fleeting nature of phenomena, from historical, reliable cost information. This transience of events provides a challenge to recognition, which entails greater attention be paid to accounting rules. For example, "circumscribing" and "delineating", are examples which point to the setting or drawing of patterned boundaries. But it also suggests a sense of cohesion around certain issues on which users can reach consensus. Where conceptual frameworks can settle, and mobilize support for its own position/perspective is seemingly important for conceptual issues to be resolved.

Such examples, coupled with the overuse use of words such as "evidence" and "evident" in the inactive observational category of empirical observation, suggests, however, that there is something different from the way financial accounting claims to operate as a representational activity; one that seeks to reflect economic phenomena (that which is perceived, encountered or thought) which would yield a chain of evidence. The conceptual framework is similar to truth in law, in that the accounting process that would call for tighter understanding of accounting concepts. Conceptual frameworks, rather than remaining faithful to phenomena, would settle controversies over which actual observed phenomena should be included in accounting as a form of accounting truth. Increases in active metaphors such as, *Cutting,* signifies a kind of spatial order; where accounting rules typically impose structure on things and make them visible. The event is an outcome or product of accounting's approach, where events are not always "apparent" or "indicative", but actually requires setting limits/boundaries *on* things in order for them to be seen.

6.7.4 MOVEMENT FROM ASB 1999 – IASB 2010

Table 6.6.4	Increase from ASB 1999 in IASB 2010
	Examples
Prominence	Phenomenon = Financial reports represent economic phenomena in words and numbers. To be useful, financial information must not only represent relevant phenomena, but it must also faithfully represent the phenomena that it purports to represent. Emphasis = A neutral depiction is not slanted, weighted, emphasised, de-emphasised or otherwise manipulated to increase the probability that financial information will be received favourably or unfavourably by users.
Distortion	Occur = Accrual accounting depicts the effects of transactions and other events and circumstances on a reporting entity's economic resources and claims in the periods in which those effects occur, even if the resulting cash receipts and payments occur in a different period.

The table above shows that both of these categories follow a similar pattern to the one prior. The table explains some of the increase in chart two explaining the large upward trend in more active vision metaphors. To be concise, vision is not indicative of any stable knowledge requiring a God's eye perspective. There is an increase in the activity of vision metaphor evidenced in the word's root. The *Distortion* root, for example, is constant up until the Accounting Standard Board's Statement of Principles (1999). Here an increase in the concern for concepts of identity is evidenced. Emphasis is placed on the conceptual stability of identity, regarding what events are really present. In the IASB 2010, however, there is evidence that the framework attempts to constrain this specific uncertainty. Focusing on the occurrence of specific events, the IASB secures something of an epistemological justification based on the accounting recognition criteria in order to safeguard objectivity. This is a particularly interesting finding, given that the majority of the categories of vision metaphors are more active between the UK Statement of Principles and the International Accounting Standard Board's 2010 framework. Nevertheless, the appearance of words like *"phenomena"* in the IASB 2010's framework suggests a sense of breadth – the non-specific nature of event or transaction - in terms of what events are actually being represented. This suggests greater technical expertise and of course the frequency of other reporting signs (tables, figures, narratives, and photographs) in the accounting report.

Where the indeterminacy of events requires greater structuring, the conceptual framework is itself a way of providing order by appearing to defer to the world again. Yet the appearance of "phenomena" suggests that world imposes on accounting concepts through the filtering of human experience that has to mediated through human expertise. In other words, the environment has to be coped with rather than resolved. The table shows that there is greater activity of the eye in this regard. That there is something vague, even undecidable, about economic events is detected which have to be structured by meaningful human conceptual schemes. *Prominence/Salient* type vision metaphors change from the IASB's 1989 framework where there is less emphasis on "indications" and more phrases/clauses to indicate the emphatic or the inflexible. For example, the IASB asserts, "a neutral depiction is not slanted, weighted, *emphasized* or *de-emphasized*", suggesting that an aesthetic aspect of human touching, of fixing and focusing. Where the accountant should be more concerned not with putting a particular *emphasis* or *de-emphasis* on things implies a certain metaphorical distancing from disengaged vision. What is evidenced is the structure of tactile human experience, where accounting is an exercise in fixing minor visible defects.

Rather than placing the eye on things, the proximal relation of touch becomes a more apparent metaphor; of holding firm to certain well-heeled ideas following conservative judgment and making imperceptible adjustments. Yet emphasizing or de-emphasizing through representational/presentational techniques appears to hold firm to the literal, to clarity, and to dispense with rhetorical flourishes that would undermine technical expertise. The movement from the ASB 1999 to the IASB 2010 signals an increase in the activity of the eye in this period, suggesting a shift from mapping/representing to an almost extreme non-representational technicality. This is where the body and environment are so intimately coupled that cognition, in terms of the mind as disembodied, is diminished. From the graph, the results show that the increase in activity metaphors reveals that the eye is less inactive where it is reduced to a disembodied concept of knowledge. What appears is a different form of knowledge construction taking shape.

Table 6.6.5	Increase from IASB 2010 – 2015
	Examples
Cutting	**Describe =** The IASB thinks that the term faithful representation describes those aspects better than the term reliability. **Depiction =** To a large extent, financial reports are based on estimates, judgements and models rather than exact depictions.
Grasping	**Concept =** The Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting (the Conceptual Framework) describes the objective of and the concepts for, general purpose financial reporting . It is a practical tool that: (a assists the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) to develop Standards that are based on consistent concepts; (b) assists preparers to develop consistent accounting policies when no Standard applies to a particular transaction or event , or when a Standard allows a choice of accounting policy ; and (c) assists others to understand and interpret the Standards.

Following on from the previous section, what is evident is the rise of active vision categories that refer to the body. Examples such as "grasping" for instance, refer to concepts of touch as a form of knowing. This is not in a symbolic sense any implied/tacit intimacy. But rather as a form of almost violent action. It implies a taking charge in order not to lose legitimacy. By focusing on the more rational technical expertise of the craft of accounting, accounting should focus on making conceptual frameworks more coherent, more practical, for accountants. And in order to promote the significance of accounting concepts, faithful representation and accounting relevance, accounting has a kind of hands on or hands off (*Laissez Faire*) concept that fits with a certain practical know-how. There is evidence that the current conceptual framework's exposure draft is evidence that accounting regulation is attempting to *pull it* back, to make the conceptual framework convergent with those elements of the statement that are more coherent for accountants, users and standard setters. (procedures). The increase in *Cutting* type of vision metaphors, for instance, suggests a slightly new-found confidence based on coherent accounting judgment rather exact/accurate "depictions".

Moreover, the active roots, as the table below suggests, highlights that *Vision as Knowledge* is a multifaceted conceptual metaphor. Not only amongst the active categories does its meaning alter, but also amongst the inactive categories are there differences observed. From the eye as a stationery, distant, and disembodied form of knowing, exemplified by a modern, autonomous viewing position, the conceptual framework is presented effectively as a body of technical skills with which the accountant rationally produces financial statements. The Financial Accounting Standards Board SFAC No. 2 is the starting point for such metaphors, where scientific empirical measurement is the paradigmatic choice of accounting regulation. But over time, it is evidenced a transformation of *Vision as Knowledge* takes place. From one of scientific rationality to a more generalized practice of technical expertise, the conceptual metaphor *Vision as Knowledge* conveys a more tentative stance. Where the capacity to take a disinterested approach to knowing is only bolstered by an increasing awareness of the field technicality of accounting practices as a way of knowing. Chart 6.2, in particular[146], represents the transition of the inactive categories of visual disembodied reasoning and conveys the steep downward trend after the IASB 1989, only to be recovered slightly in the IASB 2015's Exposure Draft.
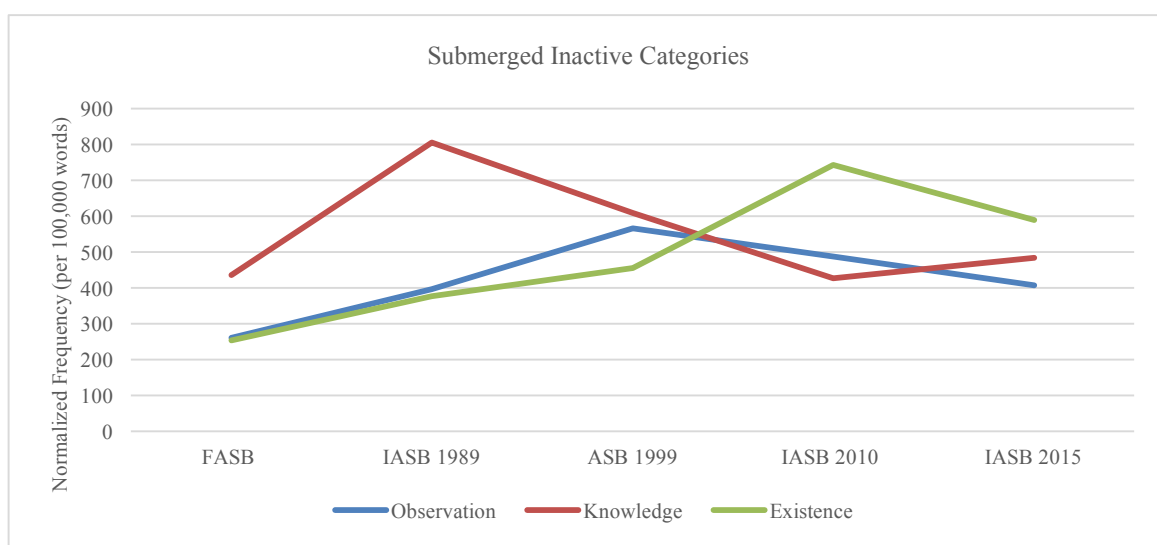

Chart 6.2: Normalized frequency of Submerged Inactive Vision Categories: Observing, Knowing, and Existing

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[146] In the graph below, what is observed are the normalized frequencies of the inactive categories. That is, those vision metaphors that have a more inactive root. And so, what is provided here is graphical information pertaining to the individual metaphor frequencies relating to each category. What is observed is that the observation category is highest in the ASB 1999, the *"Knowledge"* category is highest in the IASB 1989 and *"Existing"* category in highest towards the IASB 2010 and 2015.

6.8 INACTIVE CATEGORIES

	FASB	IASB 1989	ASB 1999	IASB 2010	IASB 2015
Observing	260.756193	397.2983711	565.762613	488.3191832	407.6968218
Knowing	436.643625	804.5292014	609.5071449	427.2792853	484.912129
Existing	253.3763007	377.4334525	454.9431321	743.576938	589.9249467
Total	950.7761187	1579.261025	1630.21289	1659.175406	1482.533898

Table 6.7 – Inactive Proto Indo-European Root Categories

As far as inactive vision metaphors go, the outcomes reveal that vision, referring to *recognition* in particular, compared to the other frameworks, conveys the importance of knowing as something internal to accounting regulation. Rather than a reflection of phenomena outside, recognition belongs to consensually determined outcomes that shape and guide the accounting recognition process. More philosophically, it is a form of weak internal realism. One that relies on human understanding of reality structured by human concepts.

It is hoped here that the repeated change in the concepts of *Vision as Knowledge* illustrates the metaphor's transformation over time. Therefore, becoming aware of knowledge in accounting requires thinking vision is open-ended. Where familiar concepts of disengagement, or *Vision as Mind*, requires adjusting in order to accommodate a different sense of what accounting knowledge is. It is hoped that what is revealed is not "one and true complete description of the way the world is" (Lakoff, 1987, p. 260). But that knowledge of reality is structured through human conceptual systems. Systems that rely on the stability or instability that we as human beings experience.

Overall, the results of the analysis reveal that there is gradual increase in active vision metaphors. This indicates a turning that alters *Vision as Knowledge* as disengaged or non-reciprocal, which is based on objectivist assumptions of distance between subject and object. The major difference between active and inactive vision metaphors was that active vision metaphors were substantially *more* frequent over time, evidencing a much greater embodied intellectual effort on the part of accounting regulation. The comparatively higher frequency in active vision metaphors in the IASB 2010, for instance, settled down in the 2015 Exposure Draft. This appears to be a call for more technical know-how and the idea of accounting

practice as aesthetic theorizing. Not to be judged woefully short of the epistemological mark that absolute objectivity presumes.

In the next part, the surrounding context (concordances) is looked at in more detail, especially in terms of the inactive categories. This in order to examine this transformation in a little more detail. And where possible, show how inactive concepts of vision: knowing, observation and existing roots, transform over time. If indeed they do. The chart above illustrates that the relationship is a fairly flat one over time, however there are indications of some disequilibrium over time.

6.8.1 FASB - IASB 1989: KNOWING AS RECOGNIZING

Table 6.8 above reveals that knowing category is the highest in the earlier conceptual frameworks. These words have a connection to knowledge (Indo European root is *gno*). Mainly referring to financial accounting *recognition,* this table conveys that *Knowing* is the highest visual category in the IASB 1989.

A more detailed look at the context of the words extracted from the IASB 1989 conceptual framework is shown below. These provide insights into the use of vision metaphor relating to inactive root of knowing (reflective knowing rather than a practical knowing). The IASB (1989) tends towards *recognition*. The IASB states that information is reliable (meaning that there is a correspondence between accounting and event) if it**,** "meets the recognition criteria" – the accounting rules. It is evident of that a faithful representation given by the accounting rules.

> "To be reliable, information must represent faithfully the transactions and other events it either purports to represent or could reasonably be expected to represent. Thus, for example, a balance sheet should represent faithfully the transactions and other events that result in assets, liabilities and equity of the entity at **the reporting date which meet the recognition criteria."**
>
> (IASB 1989, p. 33-34, *bold type added*)

Contrasting this with the later IASB 2010 framework, recognition is much more of a doing or a process, mainly focusing on making recognition appear almost systematically effortless. It is, (a) meeting the definition of asset or liability, and (b) deciding whether the event is capable of being measured.

"Items that satisfy the recognition criteria should be recognized in the balance sheet or income statement. The failure to recognize such items is not rectified by disclosure of the accounting policies used nor by notes or explanatory material. An item that meets the definition of an element should be recognized **if**: (a) it is probable that any future economic benefit associated with the item will flow to or from the entity; and (b) the item has a cost or value that can be measured with reliability."

(IASB, 2010, para. 4.38)

And the IASB exposure draft 2015 uses a metaphor of "capturing", suggesting that recognition process guides representation (existence).

"Recognition is the process of capturing, for inclusion in the statement of financial position or the statement(s) of financial performance, an item that meets the definition of an element. It involves depicting the item (either alone or as part of a line item) in words and by a monetary amount, and including that amount in totals in the relevant statement."

(IASB, 2015, Exposure Draft, para. 5.2)

The infrequent use of "diagnosis" after FASB is perhaps interesting too. The FASB has to "explain phenomena". And this means looking for "underlying causes", as in the case of a medical diagnosis.

"The ability to **explain phenomena** often depends on the diagnosis of the **underlying causes** of differences or the **discovery** that apparent differences are without significance."

(FASB, SFAC, No. 2, para. 119, *bold type added*)

Conceptual frameworks use the recognition criteria in a way that suggests there is a process of recognition as a form re-cognition or of re-knowing. They avoid any talk of "limitations" and "unreliable nature of information". The use of the phrase "clarity", related to the root clear, meaning *kele – to shout, and depict, from root *peik – to cut/embroider, indicates the accountant is confident in the way financial accounting information is *presented* under existing concepts.

Over time conceptual frameworks promote more perceptual activity and relates knowledge to perceptual activity. Therefore, there is no distinction made between representation (*es - existence) and recognition (*gno - re-cognition) in the most recent frameworks. The

accounting recognition criteria have apparently replaced talk of reality (essences/features) with the representational rule making activity, *as* a form of knowledge. While the FASB talks of existence on more than one occasion, the recent frameworks side-step such concerns, and seem to be content with talk about the human practice (more activity) that the accountant should follow. This seems to be why accounting has avoided talk of knowledge (recognition criteria) in relation to re-presentation (existence). It seems the case that accounting evolves the meaning of *Vision as Knowledge* to take on the shape of something similar to human memory, through memory of accounting recognition (rules). This gradually forms into a perspective that serves to highlight talk of representation (existence) in relation to a repetitive process, by which recognition is achieved without the support, it must be added, of any underlying reality.

6.8.2 IASB 1989 – ASB 1999: INACTIVE VISION METAPHORS - OBSERVING

As mentioned, most of our language today stretches back millennia to very basic, primitive human activities. These activities could be inactive activities, such as looking and observing. These activities are embodied activities, which are more directly linked to intellectual notions of the mind as a disembodied entity. In relation to this, The ASB 1999 evidences more observation based metaphors that pertains to the root, **weid,* which means, *to observe*. As Sweetser (1990) explains, everyday language is rooted in vision because vision *feels* objective**.** As Sweetser (1990, p. 21) explains, "deep and pervasive metaphorical connections link our vocabulary of physical perception with intellect and knowledge".

When the Accounting Standard Board's 1999 Statement of Principles is looked at, however, a focus on observation indicates a turning point for accounting regulation. A turning point towards human perception and observation. If chart 6.1 is observed (above) what is shown is a convergence between active and inactive categories between the IASB 1989 and the ASB 1999. From this, it is evident that vision pervades much of the language of conceptual frameworks, especially in the ASB 1999. If metaphors like "view" are observed (other examples include, "saw, "seen", and "perspective") vision's ubiquity signifies the connection between seeing as a form of knowledge, supported by accounting evidence.

6.8.2.1 ASB 1999 - EVIDENCE GATHERING

Therefore, one interesting vision metaphor that appears in the ASB 1999 Statement of Principles relates to evidence gathering. This suggests greater focus on detailed, substantive work. The ASB makes almost excessive reference to "evidence"**,** with over 50 occurrences.

"Similarly, in the case of a potential liability there could be uncertainty whether the obligation exists and whether that obligation might require the reporting entity to transfer economic benefits. 5.14 Uncertainty of this kind (element uncertainty) is countered by evidence the more evidence there is about an item and the better the quality of that evidence, the less uncertainty there will be over the items existence and nature. To recognize an item it is necessary to have sufficient evidence, both in amount and quality, that the item exists and is an asset or liability of the reporting entity. This is reflected in the first of the two criteria for initial recognition, which requires that sufficient evidence must exist that a new asset or liability has been created or that there has been an addition to an existing asset or liability. What constitutes sufficient evidence is a matter of judgement in the particular circumstances of each case although, while the evidence needs to be adequate, it need not be (and often cannot be) conclusive. The main source of evidence will be past or present experience with the item itself or with similar items, including: (a) evidence provided by the event that has given rise to the possible asset or liability; (b) past experience with similar items (for example, successful research and development in the past); (c) current information directly relating to the possible asset or liability; and (d) evidence provided by transactions of other entities in similar assets and liabilities."

(ASB, 1999, para. 5.14)

Emphasis on visual appearances highlights a sense of an accounting anxiety. As imposing external pressures in the forms of mark to market valuation changes the relationship between accounting qualitative characteristics, between relevance and reliability. The quotation above reveals that the Accounting Standards Board demands more of the accountant to gather more and more evidence. In the ASB's Statement of Principles the use of the words "evidence/evident" is remarkable by its overuse alone. The extensive overuse of evidence is a turning point. Where the ASB tends to move towards relevant fair value oriented accounting, it would appear, which challenges the reliability characteristic as the basis for accounting knowledge and objectivity.

6.8.2.2 ASB 1999 - GUISE AND ENVISAGE

This list continues with particularly unique examples from specific frameworks in this respect. Vision metaphors like "guise" and "envisage" in the Accounting Standards Board,

might suggest vision is not altogether clear, not altogether technically accurate. "Guise" and "envisage" imply that phenomena effectively fleet before the eyes.

> "The Statement envisages that, if the current value basis of measurement is regarded as the most appropriate measurement basis for a particular category of assets, all assets within that category will be recognized at their current value."

> "The realization notion originally came into use in order to protect creditors from the uncertainties that arise in accruals accounting, and its purpose was to try to ensure that profits were not overstated and that there was sufficient cash available to distribute those profits without the company becoming insolvent. In this guise, the notion was understood to involve the conversion into cash of non-cash resources and rights to cash."

> (ASB, 1999, para, 4.21 & p.47 respectively)

Rather than a fixed gaze, and in conjunction with the active metaphors found above, of "delineate" and "circumscribe", subsequent conceptual frameworks seem to experience on semblance of control again, where concepts of vision arise. Where the realization that the representation no longer refers to something in the real world, there is maybe a regression to a nostalgic image of the past, one that is shaped into one that is wholesome, as the past becomes something of an anchor.

6.8.2.3 IASB 2010 AND 2015 EXPOSURE DRAFT - VISION AND OUTLOOK

Some observation metaphors are exclusive to the IASB 2010 and to the 2015 draft. These metaphors reside within the frameworks as submerged metaphoric language. Specifically: "vision" and "outlook" are the most frequent *Observation* type metaphors that appear in these conceptual frameworks. Looking Forward, or looking to the future, appears to be the main trope in the IASB 2010-2015 that is mainly submerged in these frameworks. The conceptual framework moves mainly towards user need as axiomatic. Thus, all observational metaphors point to the ordinariness and hiddenness of vision in language. As Gibbs acknowledges "these expressions [those vision metaphors that 'are no longer part of our everyday thinking', are representative of metaphorical systems of thought that are very much alive" (Gibbs, 1994 p. 158). These are specific cases of conceptual vision metaphors that reveal, "that our everyday cognition is, at least partially, metaphorically structured is that it helps to explain how the related senses of polysemous words, such as *see, point and look* come to acquire the meaning they do over time" (Gibbs, 1994, p, 158). Later frameworks

have achieved somewhat of a social acceptability that goes unnoticed in the very literal everyday language used every day. The frameworks have a commonplace language that restricts thought to normal models that fit with existing concepts, making those concepts as coherent as possible that preserves extant accounting concepts.

6.8.3 IASB 2010 AND IASB 2015: INACTIVE VISION METAPHOR – EXISTING

Table 6.7 shows the number of occurrences and the corresponding meaning of the word's inactive root. Table 6.7 above shows there are mainly accounting concepts that reveal the "Existence" – the root **es – to exist/to be*, and that representation is the most overused word that we found in the conceptual frameworks in the IASB 2010, 2015. This is evidenced by the move towards *representation* and this increase in the active categories that appear in the frameworks later in the first graph, in relation to grasping, and by the active vision metaphor graphical representation, that signifies a sense of control. This is compared with the IASB 2010, a faithful representation is particularly based on **completion, neutrality and freedom from error,** meaning faithful to the **application** of rules.

> "Financial reports represent economic phenomena in words and numbers. To be useful, financial information must not only **represent relevant** phenomena, but it must also faithfully represent the phenomena that it purports to represent. To be a perfectly faithful representation, a depiction would have three characteristics**. It would be complete, neutral and free from error.***"*

> (IASB, 2010, QC.12, *emphasis added*)

In terms of deliberate metaphors of vision, such metaphors disappear entirely after FASB 1980. However, later frameworks obviate the need for metaphors of vision, suggesting that a stronger emphasis be put on what the accountant is doing. So that accountants know what they are doing, and what they are doing is following accounting principles and standards. Macintosh argues that "Simply seeing it [accounting] as a set of procedural postulates or standards, or depicting accounting and accountants theoretically as commodities structured according to the laws of the market place, or demanding that double entry bookkeeping be the procedural method of choice may no longer be of much help" (Macintosh, 2000, xiv).

6.9 DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY OF RESULTS

It is discovered that there is a movement away from inactive vision (*Vision as Mind*). The analysis reveals that the most prominent finding is a general increase in active vision metaphors over time, up until the IASB 2010 (please refer to chart 6.3 below).
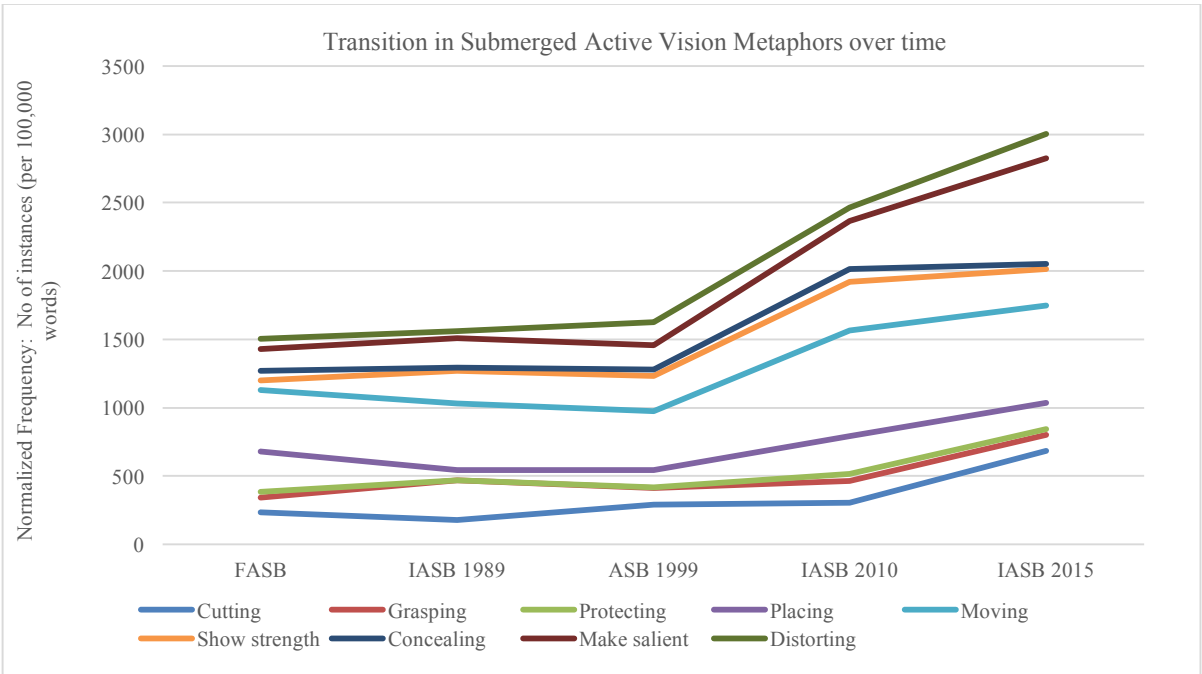

Chart 6.3: Normalized Frequency of trend in active vision metaphors over period

Overall, the *Vision is Knowledge* metaphor is not a definitive concept, nor is it mainly connected with epistemological realism (inner eye of the mind). *Vision as Knowledge* is not connected to a disembodied metaphor of vision. Rather, there are increases in activity thereafter, such as in the categories of Vision as Prominence and Vision as Concealing, and also Vision as Cutting, where there is evidence that vision is like the body (*Vision as Body*). And therefore, the general direction of the categories suggests a movement away from vision as passive, empirical knowing through the eyes. The inactive categories move away from a starting point of Vision as Knowing as corresponding to absolute seeing to something resembling human embodiment, as evidence by the number of root categories that share a relationship to active embodiment (please refer to the table on the next page - Table 6.8).

Root Category	Morpheme/PIE Root	Visual Examples from Conceptual Frameworks	Source
Existing	Represent - *es – to be/*sta – to exist	Real things and events that affect a dynamic and complex business enterprise are **represented** in financial statements by words and numbers, which are necessarily highly simplified symbols of the real thing.	FASB (1982)
Knowing	Recognize - *gno – to know	A transaction or other event is faithfully represented in the financial statements if the way in which it is **recognised,** measured and presented in those statements corresponds closely to the effect of that transaction or event.	ASB (1999)
Grasping	Concept- *kap – to grasp	Accounting **concepts** guide the selection of transactions, events, and circumstances to be accounted for.	FASB (1978)
Distorting	Reflect - *bhendh – to bend	Furthermore, financial statements have various inherent limitations that make them an imperfect vehicle for **reflecting** the full effects of transactions and other events.	ASB (1999)
Cutting	Describe - *Skribh – to cut	Financial statements are frequently **described** as showing a true and fair view.	IASB (1989)
Observing	Insight - *weid – to see	The classifications used to achieve this also have regard to the additional **insights** that can be obtained…	ASB (1999)
Setting in place	Significance – dhe* to set/put in place	For some items, a complete depiction may also entail explanations of **significant** facts about the quality and nature of the items, factors and circumstances that might affect their quality and nature, and the process used to determine the numerical depiction.	IASB (2010)
Carrying	Discern - *Krei – to sieve/filter	A term has no commercial substance if it has no **discernible** effect on the economics of the contracts…	IASB (2015)
Protecting	Conservative - *ser – to protect/to preserve	Deliberately reflecting **conservative** estimates of assets, liabilities, income or equity has sometimes been considered desirable.	IASB (2015)
Strength	Evaluate - *wal – to be strong/be well	Information about cash flows helps users understand a reporting entity's operations, **evaluate** its financing and investing activities…	IASB (2010)
Exposure	Detect - *(s)teg - to uncover	Unreliability of that kind may not be easy to **detect** but once detected its nature is not open to argument.	FASB (1980)
Salience	Consider - *sweid – to shine	In achieving a balance between relevance and reliability, the overriding **consideration** is how best to satisfy the economic decision-making needs of users	IASB (1989)
Perception	Regard - *wer – to perceive	In some countries, such provisions are not **regarded** as liabilities…	IASB (1989)

Table 6.8 Root categories: Excerpts from the Conceptual frameworks

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Going back through each framework as a historical, contingent transformative discourse, the thesis would claim the following. That the transition follows something similar to Baudrillard's four phases of the sign: in which there are four main eras of the image. In relation to these images, what is observed is a kind of transition. This transition is from absolute Platonic forms, to a kind of Nietzchean or post-Nietzchean skepticism (reality as it is in itself) and then onto a postmodern world of appearance - simulation as reality[147].

By virtue of this shift it might follow that accounting moves towards a disavowal of objects. To conceive nature in a particularly disinterested, disengaged and disembodied manner would be something the thesis rejects, however. Even though Baudrillard could be used as a way to conceive framework transition, it would also lend itself to a kind of intellectual distance too; one that presumes an epistemologically, subject centered drive towards the postmodern collapse of reference. Because of thesis' intended critical/embodied realism, the idea of a world that can be carved to suit human subjects is what the thesis rejects.

In essence, the analysis performed in this chapter highlights which vision metaphors appear in conceptual frameworks over time. It is assumed humans stand in an active, functional relation to the world, and, especially, to how relations have changed. Through evidence of reading conceptual frameworks and identifying vision metaphors, the study increases understanding of knowledge in accounting conceptual frameworks. It is understood that a transition occurs; from *Vision as Mind* to *Vision as Body*. There is a re-configuring of epistemological assumptions in accounting conceptual frameworks.

What occurs is an accounting unburdened from the task of providing knowledge through a kind of human mastery. But this is far from falling into a wayward anti-realism, suggesting a troubling loss of contact. The space between human body and world is minimized since the contact between human and world is proximal. And concepts emergent within different multiple worlds.

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[147] Baudrillard explains that simulation is "a liquidation of all referentials…It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself… (Baudrillard, p. 4, trans. by Foss et al, 1983).

CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSION TO THESIS

7.0 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The thesis has studied vision metaphors over the course of almost forty years of conceptual framework history, from 1978 to 2015. The objective has been to understand the various ways in which vision metaphors appear in conceptual frameworks. Patterns were identified through exploring the vision metaphor's Proto-Indo rooting. This helped to develop a deeper understanding of how conceptual frameworks conceptualize knowledge and objectivity. This was done not to locate obvious metaphors that sit as content on the surface of language. But to understand at a much deeper level, how the absent background helps to illustrate the flight from modernity to postmodernity. Using the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, and theorized through art scholars/critics and historians, the thesis has revealed various trends in the senses or subtleties in the types of knowledge and objectivity observed in accounting regulatory history since the 1970s.

Trends overall indicated how conceptual frameworks conceptualize objective knowledge and how such unacknowledged, non-deliberate vision metaphors evolve. First, the thesis attempted to classify these vision metaphors into categories, in order to study their meaning development patterns over the period chosen. The period of study attempted to capture the flight from modernity to postmodernity:

> Research Question 1: Are there differences in the type of categories of vision metaphors that appear in conceptual frameworks in the period from FASB 1978 to IASB 2015 Exposure Draft?

The results from the first research question showed that there are deliberate and submerged metaphors of vision in accounting conceptual frameworks. Few metaphors in the Financial Accounting Standards Board's framework were deliberately used, it was discovered. Intentional metaphors were those that David Solomon used in the SFAC No. 2 Qualitative characteristics statement. The majority of other vision metaphors were submerged within the frameworks, and it was found that these could be explained in terms of a much deeper body-world relationship, not from an evocative image-making foreground that one normally associates with metaphor.

Research Question 2: What is the evolution in the patterns/trends in these types of vision metaphors that appear in conceptual frameworks inform about the way conceptual frameworks conceptualize knowledge?

The results from the second research question conveyed that submerged, everyday vision metaphors provide evidence of different ways knowledge and objectivity has altered in accounting conceptual frameworks. From Vision is Mind, to Vision is Body, a shift was identified. In particular, it was evidenced that there is transformation from a representational form of vision, close to the "inner eye of the mind" (Jay, 1994, p.27). This shift bears greater resemblance to a greater visual experience, attached to a body that moves the eye.

The results, overall, reveal that there is an increasing sense that knowledge is unfixed, perhaps even less so by the rules of the accounting representation. It is pointed out that maintaining a good conceptual eye (an inner eye agreeable to pure reason) on the workings of organizations becomes gradually difficult. And that the viewer's eye appears to be trying to cope to a considerable extent the excesses of new, perhaps confusing, information. By re-assessing the eye as attached to a body that moves it over the accounting representation, it is recognized that knowledge is first conceptualized as an eye of the mind that simply is fixed through accounting concepts. In the first phase, it is a rather confident eye that verified and provided a good image of corporate reality, which, to some extent, is closer to absolute objectivity and the correspondence theory of reference.

It is found that over time accounting knowledge is no longer conceptualized as an eye that views a passive, inert, knowable social world. That over time, the active eye emerges as an embodied sort of tool (moving, cutting, grasping et al.). Accounting knowledge is transformed from an eye that simply looks, that seeks some distance between body and world. Since the eye has to move to take in information and, ultimately, make sense out of new information, there is basically a collapsing in towards the subject; the subject dealing with the varied refractions of all sorts of information.

And this is demonstrated in the thesis's results. As an emancipation from the intellectual modernist based distinctions of subject-object separation, and the departure from representation and absolute epistemology, it is evident that knowledge is an outcome of relational field which is open to alternative readings and understandings.

The distribution of subject and object maintains knowledge under a paradigm of distance. The idea that these representative assemblages can be brought together below the surface of overt metaphor was shown using the thoughts of Megill (1994), Hetherington (1998), Law

and Benschop (1997) and Hal Foster (1996). Explaining using different works of art how there a shift appears from the vision of Renaissance Artists (a cold, distant, gaze from above), the thesis foregrounds ironically the background; subtle changes that highlight the importance of materiality without Descartes's substance, "where space is no longer what it seemed to Descartes" (Levin, 1994, p. 170). What these types of representations imply about the nature of incontrovertible knowledge today is that the world exceeds, in some sense, an ultimate foundation for knowledge; a knowledge that favors the impulse to map. Practical knowledge (less mind-like) substitutes for such a lack, where accounting practice can be seen as one of the situated practices of Anne Marie Mol's multiple ontologies. Accounting justifies knowledge in terms of more aesthetic appreciation of the complexity of one's craft, one's technical know-how, that is both metaphorical (in the sense of a technical know-how or a love of knowledge); one that appears so exacting, that it has to appear to be literal; that is, scientific, geometric or deeply grasping of objects/events in order to be taken seriously.

7.1 ACCOUNTING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS AND POLITICAL ONTOLOGY

Finally, the analysis of accounting conceptual frameworks in this thesis appears to demonstrate another important aspect of financial accounting: the "ontological politics" (a term first used by Annemarie Mol) of conceptual frameworks. In her terms, talk of ontological politics means looking at the relations, the way in which reality is produced through practices that are multiple and, ultimately, contestable. As she states, "if reality is done, if it is historically, culturally and materially located, then it is also multiple (1999, p. 75). Given that "reality is done", then politics is the way in which humans and non-humans relate to one another. In terms of this shifting, or emergence, in the concept of *Vision as Knowledge* from *Vision as Mind* to *Vision as Body,* there is a broad finding with the thesis: that the relational ontology of the thesis supposes that body and world is inseparable. That our concepts of knowledge are tied to political concerns is revealed through change, emergence through relations.

How fundamental accounting concepts of knowledge, vision and objectivity appear to be evolving in a backgrounded latent manner supposes that these shifts in meaning reveal concepts that shape politics; not in terms of a strict world divide with human agency or social relations (politics) on the one hand and a passive world of controllable objects on the other. But to merge human and world that gives rise to an understanding of the political character. Politics that enacts the human and non-human relation.

First, it was discovered from the literature that thinking about metaphor is based on its foreground nature. The common view of metaphor presumes something about subjects, their world and their society. In control, subjects assume control of language, which implies clear access to concepts in order to emancipate from prevailing systems. To some degree, such a view merges with the capitalistic assumption: the world as a standing reserve for the control and manipulation by subjects. Where reality awaits clear literal representation, image or word, this too, presumes human independence – it presumes distance between ourselves, others and environments. In terms of metaphor, such determination usually implies a kind of special access to world, its meanings, through language. Where metaphors are understood in terms of power, giving things names is symbolic of possession. The thesis highlights overt metaphors in order to make readers aware of their significance to ideology, rhetoric and specifically to human agency in which subjectivity and objectivity are mutually exclusive.

The thesis sees this differently. Not in terms of metaphors only shaping thought perhaps in a biased or subjective manner to support positions of power through the construction of myth. Instead, the thesis' view that metaphors should be also seen as outcomes. Metaphors should be viewed as evidence of a closer dialectical relation between a collective broader societal engagement (sharing with others, human and non-human) and a broader general environment constraint (acting within the constraints). These relations evolve, shaping understanding in not so apparent ways and remain dead in debate. It has been argued throughout the thesis that certain metaphors are much more backgrounded and submerged conceptual significance – part of the subconscious of accounting regulation.

The thesis' contribution to knowledge is overall as follows. In showing how accounting concepts evolve - not from a specifically conscious, instrumental struggle to change - but through primarily from a position of embodiment within the broader world, the thesis finds that discussion around concepts of subconscious vision has remains muted in financial accounting reason. Consequently, the thesis imparts how conceptual framework as a homogenous project is a largely an evolving subconscious discourse. Exploring non-deliberate (backgrounded) metaphors of vision, the thesis has considered to what extent conceptual frameworks ought to move from the assumption that accounting conceptions fix the eye (construct subjectivity as a rational eye) onto an organization: an organization that is seen, now, to lack substance through accounting concepts. The thesis discovers that when the eye as a metaphor for the rational mind deconstructs, problems with accounting as a constitutive force arises.

To this end, the world is no longer conceived a passive object to be represented by an idle rationalism when looked at through vision metaphors. Here, it seems that the aim of frameworks is to convince only lenders, creditors and investors about the rational objectivity and knowledge of financial accounting's representation of object and accounting narrows its concerns. As evidenced here, this logic is totally out of step with an empirical embodied experience that travels, that looks elsewhere. The distracted eye of our current, technologically advanced capitalist age fleets away from accounting concepts that hold onto the firm as conceptually "profitable", "liquid" or "liable", as the distinction between accounting information and other media blur (See Graves, Flescher and Jordan, 1996, Davison, 2010, 2011, 2014). Accounting reports shall have to face up to the firm's other social obligations, as conventional accounting concepts fail to provide such a mirrored, faithful representation.

To be slightly glib, it might be suggested that vision is not focused by an accounting representation of an organization any more than it is focused by the reporting image of say a corporate reporting photograph. By concealing such issues, conceptual frameworks mask deeper issues for conventional accounting (Nobes, 1999). This distracted eye may fleet from the main elements of the accounting statements, and look elsewhere; elsewhere for evidence of faithful representation(s). In this respect, any shallow representationalist notion of accounting rules that simply mirror objects/events endowed with inherent economic features raises questions about identity – what are the determinants of the reporting entity if not captured by accounting rules. And since conceptual frameworks appear rather agnostic about the sheer scale of reporting narratives, any notion of a user's eye, which takes the form a disembodied gaze onto such features, has to be jettisoned. In a successful explanation of today's subjectivity, this construction of the viewer as a disembodied economic construct is unstable. The findings from the thesis assume a different economic user; a user constructed as a different kind of roving eye where information rather knowledge is taken to mean 'without center'. As Tim Morton aptly asserts, "there is no center and we don't inhabit it" (Morton, 2013 p. 17).

To end the thesis, the thesis considers two related threats for financial accounting, before offering a brief conclusion in order to offer a suggestion to subsequent accounting conceptual framework development.

The first threat is that accounting will become a rigid, automatic sort of over-professionalized practice; one that is incapable of challenging the status quo as it becomes too narrow, too technocratic. Accounting will not provide the necessary restraints to achieve consciousness

in order to emancipate from some of capitalism's more destructive tendencies. More precisely, accounting will disavow any moral compass for choosing between right and wrong if it looks to the market (fair value) as a safe buoy. If debate ceases, there is a real danger that the organization will effectively disappear under accounting concepts that seek to narrow down, to reduce conceptual scope, and where eventually the highly technical gives way to increasing vacuity.

What this leads to is the second threat for financial accounting. As accounting fails or moves away from foundations of corporate capitalism, what is proposed is that accounting will become a post-foundational discourse. As an outcome, the user's eye drifts away from conventional financial accounting, and looks for faithful representation via other reporting narratives. Corporate reporting signs (graphs, table, images, diagrams), supplement the failed correspondence model that financial accounting seeks. And so, corporate social responsibility reports, environmental disclosures, management commentaries, chairman's statements, photographic images et al. not only reveal the fragmented, conventional vanishing point around which the report is structured (the corporation), but also evidences that this anchor is laid waste in the excesses of such disclosures that seek to point at a firm that is caught between its concepts (for example, profit) and social demands (for example, environmental). What comes to represent a move from the modern to the postmodern is actually evidence of the liminal state between modern (including the postmodern) and a new age yet to be realized. It is appreciated that once accounting concepts are freed from the ontology of perhaps a modernist era of meta-narrative assumptions of vision and permanence, then it might be asked whether there is any need/notion to keep with concepts that are underpinned by an anthropocentric, subject-centered visual idealism.

Overall, maybe the main conclusion from the thesis is that the only alternative may be to consider how best to reach wider rational agreement based on a shared experience of reality. Because it is acknowledged that our concepts structure how we live with one another, it is suggested that it might be better to think in terms of metaphors of balance. To talk in terms of diplomacy, respect, negotiation, harmony and reason - rather than absolute vision in terms of metaphors or distance/isolation/a-priori assumptions. In other words, it is important for accounting regulation to be made aware of metaphors relied upon that shape reason.

Maybe this is a starting point from which to think accounting out of the scientific ideal and visual, modelling metaphors. Thought that tends towards a decay of accounting as a discipline through increasing self-absorption. The implication that knowledge can only be achieved via a "mirror of nature", cannot be guaranteed for human centered accounts of the

world that rely on the schizophrenia inherent within organizational entities, and increasing technical professionalization. To begin to think in terms of reasoned, wider debate in order to share richer, wider, and more importantly reflect diverse lived experiences, would reveal differences that could potentially engender real engagement in real/essential forms of reason in accounting. A view that is needed in the emergence of human conceptual systems such as financial accounting that tends towards being overly-technical, and overall, blind.

Therefore, what is revealed, in the thesis' results, has to be based on a deeply political question: what 'ought' to be done? How we as subjects reach agreement on what really matters: our shared world. Questions of matters do not end with the corporate organization and that this may require making an ontological political choice based on supporting difference/other lived realities may surprise. This is deemed significant, and, ultimately possible for accounting. In order to enact the condition(s) that foster greater reasoned and rational participation to take shape for alternative accounts to develop, accounting regulators should also acknowledge the importance of the metaphor of *touch*, of intimacy, of proximal consensus, in the shaping of its outcomes. Rather than continue maintaining and salvaging a vision metaphor that suggests an outmoded specular mode of knowing, to which conceptual frameworks over time have become over accustomed, accounting regulation needs to consider the way in which touch and interaction is not only democratically desirable, but inherently part of how we live. To establish plurality and restore what accounting appears to have lost, faith must be placed not in the objectivism of the absolute, but to assume the inescapability of humans and their embodied, epistemic capacity for reason in interaction with humans and non-humans.

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ACCOUNTING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

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Deliberate Vision Metaphors[148]

Novel vision metaphors evoked images of science and scientific. These were small in number. These metaphors appeared exclusively in the SFAC No.2 (1980) qualitative characteristics statement.

Financial Accounting Standards Board (SFAC, No. 2 Qualitative Characteristics)	Number of occurrences
Meteorology	6
Barometer	3
Satellite	1
Map/Mapped	6
Warped	1

Deliberate metaphors are fewer in number. It is recognized that some metaphors evidenced a clear representational way of thinking about knowledge, as evidenced in FASB (SFAC, No 2). These metaphors come from David Solomons (see Zeff, 1999, for Solomons' influence). Submerged Metaphors, the focus of the thesis, were conceptual in nature, relating to a domain of embodied experience, vision, in different ways.

Active Root (body)

- The aspect of inactivity (inactive roots) should measure how much association there is with vision, and to what extent the body (activity) is active in the word.

Inactive Root (mind)

- The basic idea is that physical activity is absent in the type of contemplative vision examined here. The conventionality of vision in language of course associates with objective, value free language.

Observation Vision Metaphors(mind)

- Observation Vision Metaphors (those with an Indo-European root of *-weid) are explored here.

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[148] Deliberate metaphors appear only in the Financial Accounting Standards Board, SFAC, No2. qualitative characteristics statement, (1980).

FASB		PIE root	
Insight	2	"sekw (2)	to see
Perspective	2	*spek	to observe
Suspicion/suspicious	1	*spek	to observe
View/Views	36	*weid	to see
Review/Reviewed	6	*weid	to see
Evidence/Evident	5	*weid	to see
Survey	2	*weid	to see
Inspect/Inspection	1	*spek	to observe
Guide/Guidance	72	*weid	to see
Expect/Expectation	36	*spek	to observe
Revise/Revisions	11	*weid	to see
Prudence/Prudent	9	*weid	to see
Prospects/Prospective	8	*spek	to observe
Foresee/Foreseeable	5	*sekw- (2)	to see
Skeptical/Skepticsm	5	*spek	to observe
Hindsight	4	*sekw- (2)	to see
Unforeseen/unforeseeable	1	*sekw- (2)	to see
	206		

IASB 1989			
View/Views	6	*weid	to see
Review/Reviewed	4	*weid	to see
Evidence/Evident	3	*weid	to see
Expect/Expectation	18	*spek	to observe
Feature/Features	2	*weid	to see
Guide/Guidance	2	*weid	to see
Misled/Mislead	2	*weid	to see
Foresee/Foreseeable	1	*sekw- (2)	to see
Misguide/Misguidance	1	*weid	to see
Revise/Revisions	1	*weid	to see
	40		

ASB 1999			
Perspective	15	*spek	to observe
Envisage	**13**	*weid	to see
See	3	*sekw	to see
Insight	1	*sekw	to see
View/Views	37	*weid	to see
Review/Reviewed	12	*weid	to see
Evidence/Evident	50	*weid	to see
Expect/Expectation	50	*spek	to observe
Guide/Guidance	5	*weid	to see
Foresee/Foreseeable	4	*sekw- (2)	to see
Prospects/Prospective	**2**	*spek	to observe
Misled/Mislead	1	*weid	to see
Guise	1	*weid	to see
	194		

From the roots, specific inactive categories were identified.

IASB 2010			
View/Views	11	*weid	to see
Review/Reviewed	7	*weid	to see
Evidence/Evident	4	*wer (3)	to perceive
Vision	**1**	*weid	to see
Expect/Expectation	25	*spek	to observe
Prospects/Prospective	9	*spek	to observe
Prudence/Prudent	8	*weid	to see
Distinguish	7	*spek	to observe
Analysis/Analysts/Analyze	4	*spek	to observe
Forward-Looking	**4**	*spek	to observe
Guide/Guidance	3	*spek	to observe
Revise/Revisions	2	*weid	to see
Foresee/Foreseeable	1	*sekw- (2)	to see
Misguide/Misguidance	1	*weid	to see
Outlook	**1**	*weid	to see
	88		

IASB 2015			
Evidence/Evident	4	*weid	to see
Review/Reviewed	3	*weid	to see
Visible	1	*weid	to see
Vision	1	*weid	to see
Expect/Expectation	25	*spek	to observe
Prospects/Prospective	17	*spek	to observe
Revise/Revisions	16	*weid	to see
Guide/Guidance	14	*spek	to observe
Analysis/Analysts/Analyze	11	*spek	to observe
Forward-Looking	11	*spek	to observe
Prudence/Prudent	10	*weid	to see
Distinguish	6	*spek	to observe
Foresee/Foreseeable	4	*sekw- (2)	to see
Horizon	3	*sekw- (2)	to see
Outlook	1	*weid	to see
Apparent/Apparently	1	*weid	to see
Appear/Appearance	1	*weid	to see
Unobservable	2	*spek	to observe
Disregard	1	*spek	to observe
	132		

Knowledge/Existence Submerged Inactive Metaphors

To isolate vision, the Proto Indo-European root was used. Some of these categories refer to other activities other than intellect. I focus on the highlighted (red) areas in order to investigate change in these categories over time. It was felt that these categories could inform some of the ways CFs alter conceptions of vision, ontology (existence) and epistemology (knowing) over time.

Conventional Metaphors - Knowledge and Existence							
Knowledge/Epistemological				*Existence/Ontological*			
FASB				FASB			
Recognise/recognition	352	*gno	to know	Represent/Representation	137	*es	to be
Diagnosis	3	*gno	to know	Realisation/realised/realisable	55	*sta	to exist
	355			Essence	10	*es	to be
				Misrepresent	3	*es	to be
				Presentation/Present	1	*es	to be
					206		
IASB 1989				IASB 1989			
Recognise/recognition	81	*gno	to know	Represent/Representation	25	*es	to be
	81			Realisation/realised/realisable	2	*sta	to exist
				Presentation/Present	11	*es	to be
					38		
ASB 1999							
Recognise/recognition	204	gno	to know	Represent/Representation	46	*es	to be
Acknowledge	5	gno	to know	Realisation/realised/realisable	32	*sta	to exist
	209			Presentation/Present	70	*es	to be
				Misrepresent	3	*es	to be
				Unrealised	5	*sta	to exist
					156		
IASB 2010							
Recognise/recognition	75	gno	to know	Represent/Representation	97	*es	to be
Acknowledge	1	gno	to know	Realisation/realised/realisable	2	*sta	to exist
Derecognise	1	*gno	to know	Presentation/Present	35	*es	to be
	77				134		
IASB 2015							
Recognise/recognition	157	gno	to know	Representation	100	*es	to be
	157			Presentation/Present	49	*es	to be
				Misrepresent	1	*es	to be
				Presentation/Present	40	*es	to be
				Realise	1	*sta	to exist
					191		

The extra categories represent words that were deemed/connoted vision, but the word's root was much more *activity* based, pertaining to the body. Hence, less associated with

disengaged, passive viewing or efforts of the mind, and more connected to another human activity/the body. Here Vision = Mind moves the Vision = Body. The root of the word allowed us to focus more on passive vision metaphors, and less on those words which were ambiguous (vision or not vision). Some words can connote vision, but to a greater or lesser extent. Distortion, mainly referring to bending, as opposed to light, is one example. Some examples of these are given below. The table of roots (below), evidences some of the examples (vision) that appear in the conceptual frameworks.

Table of roots – Example(s)

Root Category	Morpheme/PIE Root	Visual Examples from Conceptual Frameworks	Source
Existence[149]	Represent - *es – to be/*sta – to exist	Real things and events that affect a dynamic and complex business enterprise are **represented** in financial statements by words and numbers, which are necessarily highly simplified symbols of the real thing.	FASB (1982)
Knowledge	Recognize - *gno – to know	A transaction or other event is faithfully represented in the financial statements if the way in which it is **recognised,** measured and presented in those statements corresponds closely to the effect of that transaction or event.	ASB (1999)
Grasping	Concept- *kap – to grasp	Accounting **concepts** guide the selection of transactions, events, and circumstances to be accounted for.	FASB (1978)
Distorting	Reflect - *bhendh – to bend	Furthermore, financial statements have various inherent limitations that make them an imperfect vehicle for **reflecting** the full effects of transactions and other events.	ASB (1999)
Cutting	Describe - *Skribh – to cut	Financial statements are frequently **described** as showing a true and fair view.	
Observation	Insight - *weid – to see	The classifications used to achieve this also have regard to the additional **insights** that can be obtained…	ASB 1999
Setting in place	Significance – dhe* to set/put in place	For some items, a complete depiction may also entail explanations of **significant** facts about the quality and nature of the items , factors and circumstances that might affect their quality and nature, and the process used to determine the numerical depiction.	IASB 2010
Carrying	Discern - *Krei – to sieve/filter	A term has no commercial substance if it has no **discernible** effect on the economics of the contracts…	IASB 2015
Protecting	Conservative - *ser – to protect/to preserve	Deliberately reflecting **conservative** estimates of assets, liabilities, income or equity has sometimes been considered desirable.	IASB 2015
Strength	Evaluate - *wal – to be strong/be well	Information about cash flows helps users understand a reporting entity's operations, **evaluate** its financing and investing activities…	IASB 2010
Exposure	Detect - *(s)teg - to uncover	Unreliability of that kind may not be easy to **detect** but once detected its nature is not open to argument.	FASB (1980)
Salience	Consider - *sweid – to shine	In achieving a balance between relevance and reliability, the overriding consideration is how best to satisfy the economic decision-making needs of users	IASB 1989

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[149] Red denotes inactive root.

Active					
	FASB	IASB 1989	ASB 1999	IASB 2010	IASB 2015
Cutting	191	18	100	55	222
Grasping	87	29	41	29	38
Protecting	36	0	2	9	13
Placing/setting	239	8	43	50	63
Moving/Carrying	367	49	149	139	230
Show strength	55	24	87	64	87
Concealing	58	2	16	17	11
Make salient	130	22	62	63	251
Distorting	61	5	57	18	58
Total	1224	157	557	444	973

Normalized Active Proto Indo-European categories

Cutting	234.9265701	178.784267	291.6302129	305.1994895	685.6719276
Grasping	107.0084377	288.041319	119.5683873	160.9233672	117.3672669
Protecting	44.27935352	0	5.832604258	49.94173464	40.15195972
Placing	293.9657081	79.45967422	125.4009915	277.4540813	194.582574
Moving	451.4034095	486.6905046	434.5290172	771.3223462	710.3808259
Show strength	67.64901232	238.3790226	253.7182852	355.1412241	268.7092689
Concealing	71.33895845	19.86491855	46.66083406	94.33438766	33.97473515
Make salient	159.8976655	218.5141041	180.810732	349.5921425	775.2416839
Distorting	75.02890458	49.66229638	166.2292213	99.88346929	179.1395126
Total	1505.49802	1559.396106	1624.380286	2463.792242	3005.219755

Conceptual framework	FASB*	IASB (1989)	ASB (1999)	IASB (2010)	IASB (2015)
All Roots	Total/Rate	Sum/Rate	Sum/Rate	Sum/Rate	Sum/Rate
Knowing *gno	355	81	209	77	157
Existing *es	206	40	175	288	237
Cutting	191	49	89	55	222
Grasping	87	49	30	6	0
Observing	212	40	194	88	132
Protecting	36	0	2	9	13

Placing	239	49	43	50	63
Moving	367	50	149	139	239
Show strength	55	2	87	64	87
Concealing	58	22	16	17	11
showing	130	50	62	63	251
Distorting	61	5	57	18	58
Total no of vision metaphors	**2010**	**437**	**1113**	**874**	**1470**

The tables in this next section of the appendix show the word counts of the vision metaphors examined, with associated Proto Indo-European Root attached. We show first, **unintentional vision metaphors**, associated with idle, passive observation which are explored over time in the thesis. In addition, some of the concordances are given.

Example: Submerged/Conventional = Observational Metaphors

	Word in CF	Count	P.I.E root	Meaning of root
Vision as Passive Observation	Insight	2	"sekw (2)	to see
	Perspective	2	*spek	to observe
	Suspicion/suspicious	1	*spek	to observe
	View/Views	36	*weid	to see
	Review/Reviewed	6	*weid	to see
	Evidence/Evident	5	*weid	to see
	Survey	2	*weid	to see
	Inspect/Inspection	1	*spek	to observe
	Guide/Guidance	72	*weid	to see
	Expect/Expectation	36	*spek	to observe
	Revise/Revisions	11	*weid	to see
	Prudence/Prudent	9	*weid	to see
	Prospects/Prospective	8	*spek	to observe
	Foresee/Foreseeable	5	*sekw- (2)	to see
	Skeptical/Skepticsm	5	*spek	to observe
	Hindsight	4	*sekw- (2)	to see
	Unforeseen/unforeseeable	1	*sekw- (2)	to see
	Seen/Saw	6	*sekw- (2)	to see
	Total	212		

IASB 1989

Vision is Passive Observation	View/Views	6	*weid	to see
	Review/Reviewed	4	*weid	to see
	Evidence/Evident	3	*weid	to see
	Expect/Expectation	18	*spek	to observe
	Feature/Features	2	*weid	to see
	Guide/Guidance	2	*weid	to see
	Misled/Mislead	2	*weid	to see
	Foresee/Foreseeable	1	*sekw- (2)	to see
	Misguide/Misguidance	1	*weid	to see
	Revise/Revisions	1	*weid	to see
	Total	40		

ASB 1999

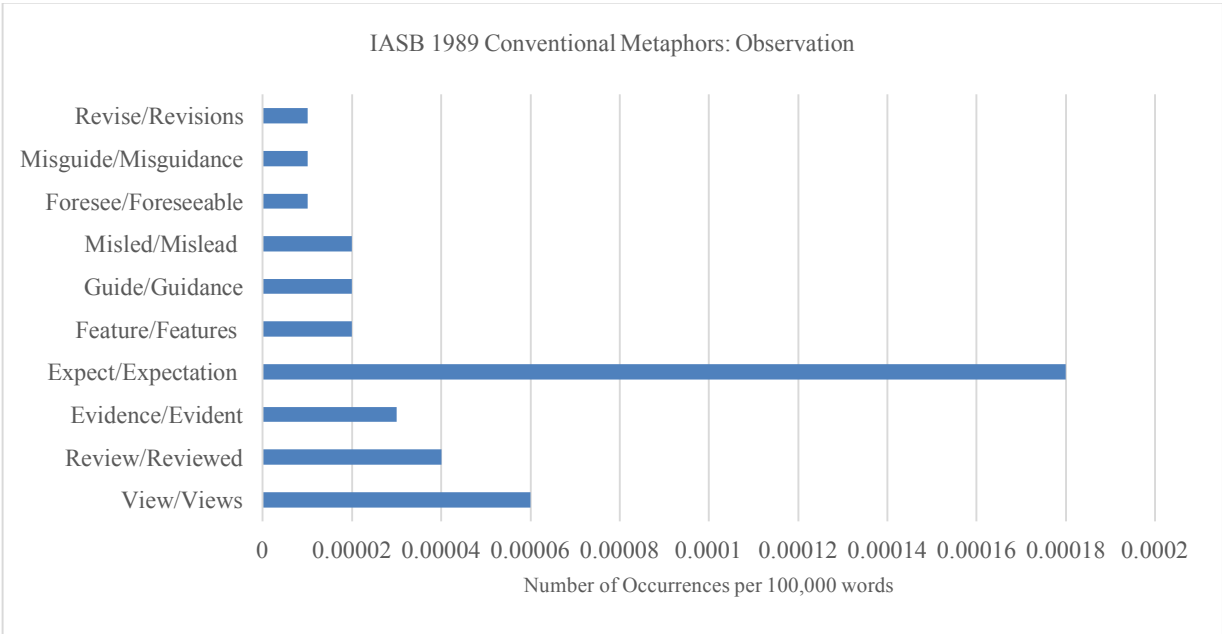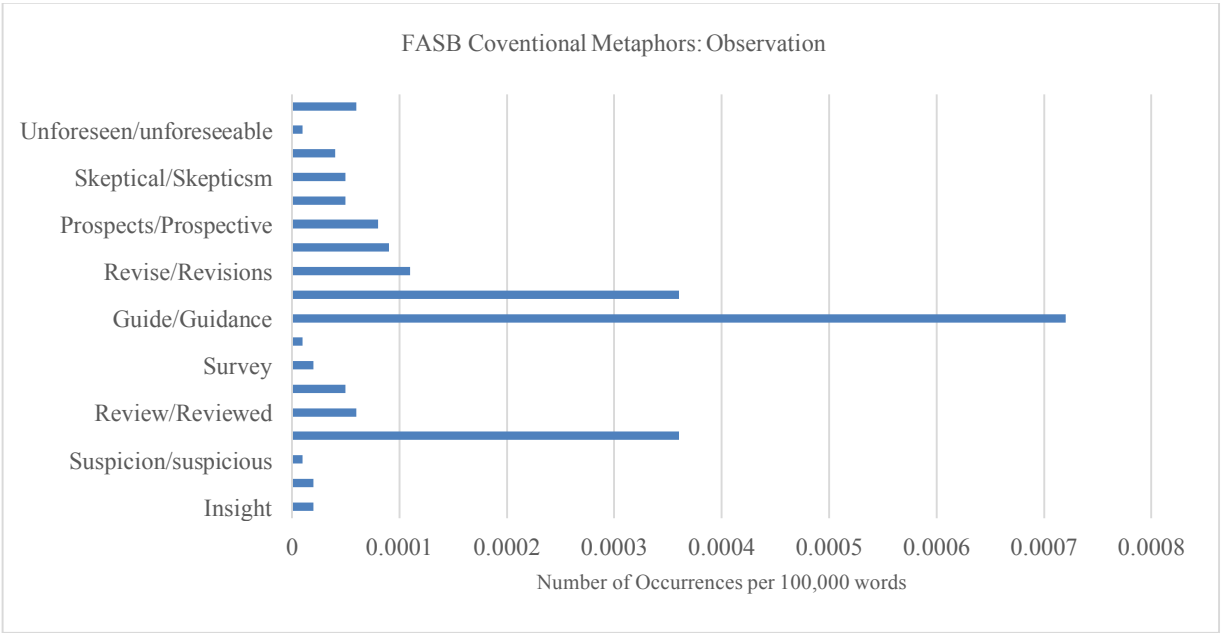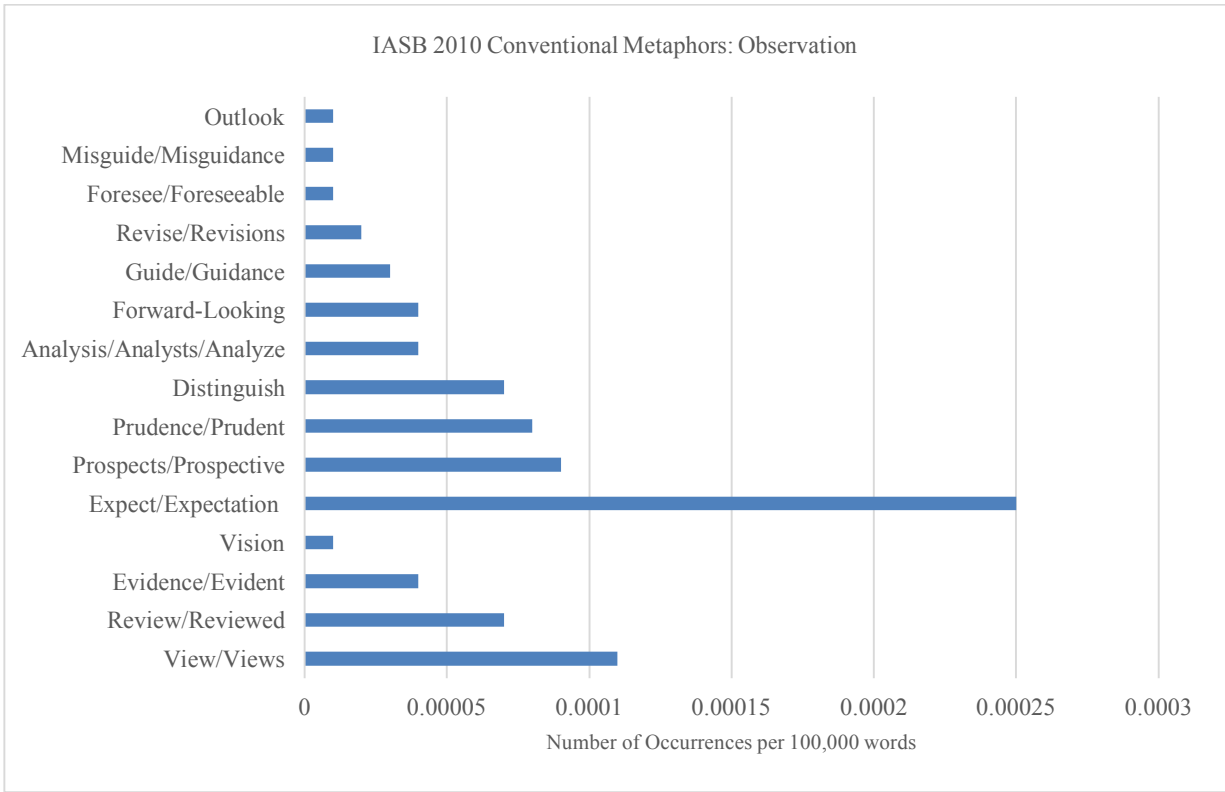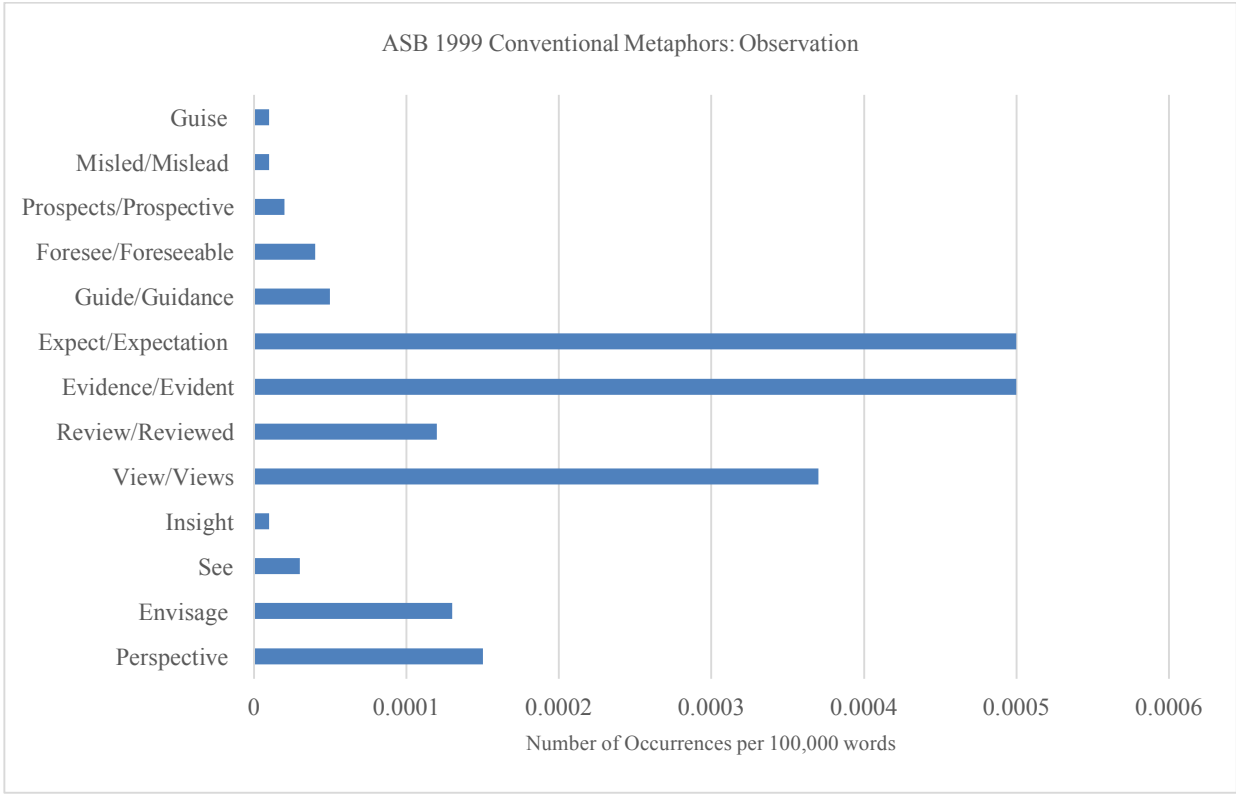| Vision is Passive Observation	Perspective	15	*spek	to observe
	Envisage	**13**	*weid	to see
	See	3	*sekw	to see
	Insight	1	*sekw	to see
	View/Views	37	*weid	to see
	Review/Reviewed	12	*weid	to see
	Evidence/Evident	50	*weid	to see
	Expect/Expectation	50	*spek	to observe
	Guide/Guidance	5	*weid	to see
	Foresee/Foreseeable	4	*sekw- (2)	to see
	Prospects/Prospective	**2**	*spek	to observe
	Misled/Mislead	1	*weid	to see
	Guise	1	*weid	to see
	Total	196		

IASB 2010

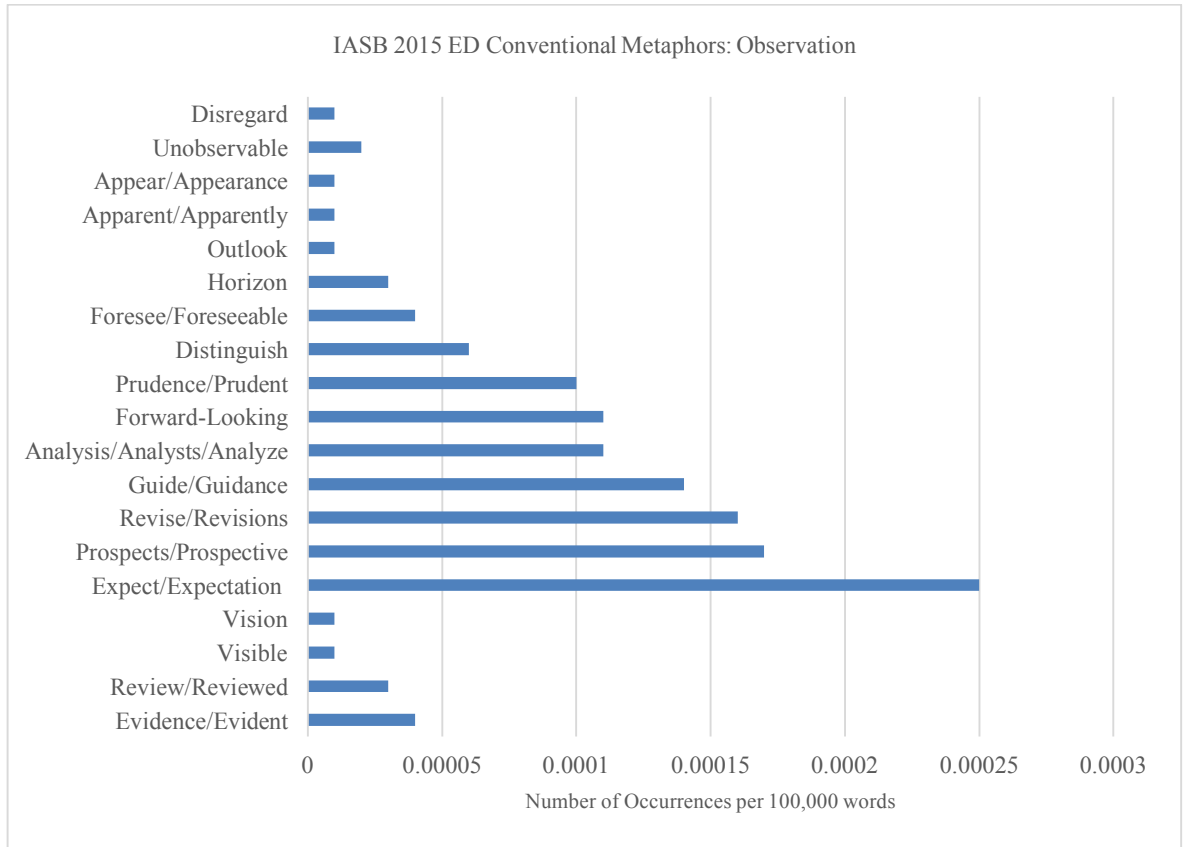| Vision is Passive Observation	View/Views	11	*weid	to see
	Review/Reviewed	7	*weid	to see
	Evidence/Evident	4	*wer (3)	to perceive
	Vision	**1**	*weid	to see
	Expect/Expectation	25	*spek	to observe
	Prospects/Prospective	9	*spek	to observe
	Prudence/Prudent	8	*weid	to see
	Distinguish	7	*spek	to observe
	Analysis/Analysts/Analyse	4	*spek	to observe
	Forward-Looking	**4**	*spek	to observe
	Guide/Guidance	3	*spek	to observe
	Revise/Revisions	2	*weid	to see
	Foresee/Foreseeable	1	*sekw- (2)	to see
	Misguide/Misguidance	1	*weid	to see
	Outlook	**1**	*weid	to see
	Total	**88**		

Vision is Passive Observation	Evidence/Evident	4	*weid	to see
	Review/Reviewed	3	*weid	to see
	Visible	1	*weid	to see
	Vision	1	*weid	to see
	Expect/Expectation	25	*spek	to observe
	Prospects/Prospective	17	*spek	to observe
	Revise/Revisions	16	*weid	to see
	Guide/Guidance	14	*spek	to observe
	Analysis/Analysts/Analyze	11	*spek	to observe
	Forward-Looking	11	*spek	to observe
	Prudence/Prudent	10	*weid	to see
	Distinguish	6	*spek	to observe
	Foresee/Foreseeable	4	*sekw- (2)	to see
	Outlook	1	*weid	to see
	Apparent/Apparently	1	*weid	to see
	Appear/Appearance	1	*weid	to see
	Unobservable	2	*spek	to observe
	Disregard	1	*spek	to observe
	Total	**132**		

Tables of Metaphors relating to *Observation - *weid*

FASB Coventional Metaphors: Observation

Number of Occurrences per 100,000 words

IASB 1989 Conventional Metaphors: Observation

Number of Occurrences per 100,000 words

ASB 1999 Conventional Metaphors: Observation

IASB 2010 Conventional Metaphors: Observation

IASB 2015 ED Conventional Metaphors: Observation

Below are shown the concordances for submerged vision metaphors with an observation Indo-European root *weid for each of the conceptual frameworks studied.

Insight	Examples
FASB 78-85	The ability to explain phenomena often depends on the diagnosis of the underlying causes of differences or the discovery that apparent differences are without significance. Much insight into the functioning of the capital market, for example, has been obtained from observing how market forces affect different stocks differently.
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	The classifications used to achieve this also have regard to the additional insights that can be obtained by considering the relationships between different classes of items, for example the relative sizes of profits and capital employed or debtors and sales.
IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	N/A

See/Saw /Seen	Examples
FASB 78-85	Unanimous acclaim for the Board's decisions is not to be expected; but the basis for those decisions should be better understood if they can be seen to be aimed at obtaining an optimal mix (as judged by the Board) of certain clearly defined informational characteristics
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	This is acknowledged in the Statement through its emphasis on specific principles rather than general notions and assumptions. In the case of prudence, for example, the smoothing of reported profits has become as great a concern as their overstatement and as a result the deliberate understatement of assets and gains and the deliberate overstatement of liabilities and losses are no longer seen as a virtue. Indeed, it is now widely accepted that the use of prudence in this way can seriously affect the quality of the information provided.
IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	N/A

Perspective	Examples
FASB 78-85	N/A - The Conceptual Framework : A Perspective (title)
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	There are a number of different perspectives from which an entity's financial performance and financial position could be viewed and the perspective adopted could have a significant effect on the assets and liabilities recognised and on their carrying amounts. In view of the objective of financial statements, the perspective that is usually most relevant is based on the assumption that the entity is to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. This perspective is commonly referred to as the going concern assumption

IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	Fair value reflects the perspective of market participants. That is, the asset or the liability is measured using the same assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or the liability if those market participants act in their economic best interest.

View	Examples
FASB 78-85	The financial capital concept is the traditional view and is generally the capital maintenance concept in present primary financial statements. Comprehensive income as defined in paragraph is a return on financial capital
IASB 1989	Financial statements are frequently described as showing a true and fair view of or as presenting fairly, the financial position, performance and changes in financial position of an entity. Although this Framework does not deal directly with such concept, the application of the principal qualitative characteristics and of appropriate accounting standards normally results in financial statements that convey what is generally understood as a true and fair view of, or as presenting fairly such information.
ASB 1999	The concept of a true and fair view lies at the heart of financial reporting in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. It is the ultimate test for financial statements and as such, has a powerful, direct effect on accounting practice . No matter how skilled the standard-setters and law-makers are, it is the need to show a true and fair view that puts their requirements in perspective. The true and fair view is furthermore a dynamic concept because its content evolves in response to changes in, inter alia accounting and business practice.
IASB 2010	Transparency, high quality, internal consistency, true and fair view or fair presentation and credibility have been suggested as desirable qualitative characteristics of financial information. However, transparency, high quality, internal consistency, true and fair view or fair presentation are different words to describe information that has the qualitative characteristics of relevance and representational faithfulness enhanced by comparability , verifiability, timeliness and understandability. Credibility is similar but also implies trustworthiness of a reporting entity's management.

IASB 2015	The IASB is of the view that if an entity chooses , or is required , to prepare unconsolidated financial statements , it would need to disclose how users may obtain the consolidated financial statements

Evident /Evidence	Examples
FASB 78-85	The central role assigned here to decision making leads straight to the overriding criterion by which all accounting choices must be judged. The better choice is the one that, subject to considerations of cost, produces from among the available alternatives information that is most useful for decision-making. So broad a generalization looks self-evident.
IASB 1989	The concept is in keeping with the uncertainty that characterises the environment in which an entity operates. Assessments of the degree of uncertainty attaching to the flow of future economic benefits are made on the basis of the evidence available when the financial statements are prepared. For example, when it is probable that a receivable owed to an entity will be paid, it is then justifiable, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, to recognise the receivable as an asset. Note - No use of the word **evident**
ASB – 1999 (50 uses)	Similarly, in the case of a potential liability there could be uncertainty whether the obligation exists and whether that obligation might require the reporting entity to transfer economic benefits. 5.14 Uncertainty of this kind (element uncertainty) is countered by evidence the more evidence there is about an item and the better the quality of that evidence, the less uncertainty there will be over the items existence and nature. To recognise an item it is necessary to have sufficient evidence, both in amount and quality, that the item exists and is an asset or liability of the reporting entity. This is reflected in the first of the two criteria for initial recognition, which requires that sufficient evidence must exist that a new asset or liability has been created or that there has been an addition to an existing asset or liability. What constitutes sufficient evidence is a matter of judgement in the particular circumstances of each case although, while the evidence needs to be adequate, it need not be (and often can not be) conclusive . The main source of evidence will be past or present experience with the item itself or with similar items, including: (a) evidence provided by the event that has given rise to the possible asset or liability; (b) past experience with similar items (for example , successful research and development in the past) ; (c) current information directly relating to the possible asset or liability; and(d) evidence provided by transactions of other entities in similar assets and liabilities.
IASB 1989	Assessments of the degree of uncertainty attaching to the flow of future economic benefits are made on the basis of the evidence available when the financial statements are prepared. For example, when it is probable that a receivable owed to an entity

	will be paid, it is then justifiable, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, to recognise the receivable as an asset.
IASB 2015	There is a close association between incurring expenditure and acquiring assets, but the two do not necessarily coincide. Hence, when an entity incurs expenditure, this may provide evidence that future economic benefits have been sought but is not conclusive proof that an asset has been obtained. Similarly, the absence of related expenditure does not preclude an item from meeting the definition of an asset.

Inspect	Examples
FASB 78-85 (1 instance)	Although conventionally referred to as qualitative characteristics, some of the more important of the characteristics of accounting information that make it useful or whose absence limit its usefulness, turn out on closer inspection to be quantitative in nature (for example costliness) or to be partly qualitative and partly quantitative (for example, reliability and timeliness).
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	N/A
IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	N/A

Guidance	Examples
FASB 78-85	Stewardship deals with the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of the steward . To say that stewardship reporting is an aspect of accounting 's decision making role is simply to say that its purpose is to **guide actions** that may need to be taken in relation to the steward or in relation to the activity that is being monitored
IASB 1989	Different accounting models exhibit different degrees of relevance and reliability and , as in other areas , management must seek a balance between relevance and reliability . This Framework is applicable to a range of accounting models and **provides guidance** on preparing and presenting the financial statements constructed under the chosen model

ASB 1999	When the Board was formed in it recognised that, if it was to develop accounting standards that were consistent with each other, it needed to develop a coherent frame of reference to guide it in its work. Indeed, one of the recommendations of the committee that recommended that the Accounting Standards Board should be established was that further work on a conceptual framework should be undertaken.
IASB 2010	This Conceptual Framework is applicable to a range of accounting models and provides guidance on preparing and presenting the financial statements constructed under the chosen model.
IASB 2015	This Conceptual Framework is applicable to a range of accounting models and provides guidance on preparing and presenting the financial statements constructed under the chosen model.

Revise	Examples
FASB 78- 85	Reasonable people, with some experience in such matters, acting responsibly in a spirit of compromise, using such reliable information as an be gathered together, will make a "calculation" as they must if anything is to be done. But the calculation will be in ordinal rather than cardinal terms; it will be rough rather than precise; it will always be subject to revision, rather than **fixed in stone.**
IASB 1989	The Framework will be revised from time to time on the basis of the Boards **experience of working with it**
ASB 1999	Such a frame of reference should clarify the conceptual underpinnings of proposed accounting standards and should enable standards to be developed on a consistent basis by **reducing the need to debate fundamental issues** each time a standard is developed or revised.
IASB 2010	The Conceptual Framework will be revised from time to time on the basis of the Boards experience of working with it
IASB 2015	This Exposure Draft sets out the proposals for a revised Conceptual Framework. It has been developed in the light of responses received on the Discussion Paper A Review of the Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting (the Discussion Paper), which was published in July 2013

Review	Examples

FASB 78- 85	Only in a few cases were other methods of selection proposed that were claimed to be more operational, and after careful review by the Board 's staff, those claims had to be rejected as being unrealistic
IASB 1989	At the present time, it is not the intention of the Board of IASC to prescribe a particular model other than in exceptional circumstances, such as for those entities reporting in the currency of a hyperinflationary economy. This intention will however be reviewed in the light of world developments.
ASB 1999	Investors need such information because it is useful in assessing and reviewing previous assessments of: (a) liquidity and solvency; (b); (c) the implications that financial performance has for future cash flows; and (d) Financial adaptability.
IASB 2010	Financial reports are prepared for users who have a reasonable knowledge of business and economic activities and who review and analyse the information diligently. At times, even well-informed and diligent users may need to seek the aid of an adviser to understand information about complex economic phenomena.
IASB 2015	Financial reports are prepared for users who have a reasonable knowledge of business and economic activities and who review and analyse the information diligently. At times, even well-informed and diligent users may need to seek the aid of an adviser to understand information about complex economic phenomena

Suspicion	Examples
FASB 78- 85	But more importantly, it is not desirable for the Board to tack with every change in the political wind, for politically motivated standards would quickly lose their credibility, and even standards that were defensible if judged against the criteria discussed in this Statement would come under suspicion because they would **be tainted with guilt by association**.
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	N/A
IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	N/A

Prudent	Examples
FASB 78-85	Prudent reporting based on a healthy skepticism builds confidence in the results and, in the long run best serves all of the divergent interests that are represented by the Board 's constituents.
IASB 1989	Such uncertainties are recognised by the disclosure of their nature and extent and by the exercise of prudence in the preparation of the financial statements. Prudence is the inclusion of a degree of caution in the exercise of the judgements needed in making the estimates required under conditions of uncertainty, such that assets or income are not overstated and liabilities or expenses are not understated.
ASB 1999	Prudence is the inclusion of a degree of caution in the exercise of the judgements needed in making the estimates required under conditions of uncertainty, such that gains and assets are not overstated and losses and liabilities are not understated. In particular, under such conditions it requires more confirmatory evidence about the existence of, and a greater reliability of measurement for, assets and gains than is required for liabilities and losses. There can also be tension between two aspects of reliability neutrality and prudence because, whilst neutrality involves freedom from deliberate or systematic bias, prudence is a potentially biased concept that seeks to ensure that, under conditions of uncertainty, gains and assets are not overstated and losses and liabilities are not understated . This tension exists only where there is uncertainty, because it is only then that prudence needs to be exercised.
IASB 2010	Representing a legal form that differs from the economic substance of the underlying economic phenomenon could not result in a faithful representation. Prudence (conservatism) and neutrality. Chapter 3 **does not include prudence** or conservatism as an aspect of faithful representation because including either would be inconsistent with neutrality.
IASB 2015	On the contrary, relevant financial information is, by definition, capable of making a difference in users decisions. 2. 18 Neutrality is supported by the exercise of prudence. Prudence is the exercise of caution when making judgements under conditions of uncertainty. The exercise of prudence means that assets and income are not overstated and liabilities and expenses are not understated.

Sceptical	Examples
FASB 78-85	The public is naturally skeptical about the reliability of financial reporting if two enterprises account differently for the same economic phenomena. In assessing the prospect that as yet uncompleted transactions will be concluded successfully, a degree of skepticism is often warranted . The aim must be to put the users of financial information in the best possible position to form their own opinion of the probable outcome of the events reported. Prudent reporting based on a healthy skepticism builds confidence in the results and in the long run, best serves all of the divergent interests that are represented by the Board 's constituents

IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	N/A
IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	N/A

Expect/ Expectation	Examples
FASB 78-85	Users of the information need to assess the possible or probable impact of factors that may cause change and form their own expectations about the future and its relation to the past. Financial reporting is but one source of information needed by those who make economic decisions about business enterprises.
IASB 1989	These are defined as follows: (a) An asset is a resource controlled by the entity as a result of past events and from which future economic benefits are expected to flow to the entity. (b) A liability is a present obligation of the entity arising from past events, the settlement of which is expected to result in an outflow from the entity of resources embodying economic benefits. (c) Equity is the residual interest in the assets of the entity after deducting all its liabilities.
ASB 1999	N/A
IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	However, general purpose financial reports do not and cannot provide all of the information that existing and potential investors, lenders and other creditors need. Those users need to consider pertinent information from other sources, for example, general economic conditions and expectations, political events and political climate, and industry and company outlooks.

Prospect	Examples

/Prospective	
FASB 78-85	Investors, creditors, and others may use reported earnings and information about the elements of financial statements in various ways to assess the prospects for cash flows. They may wish, for example, to evaluate management 's performance, estimate "earning power" predict future earnings, assess risk, or to confirm, change, or reject earlier predictions or assessments.
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	Reporting on the financial performance and financial position of an entity involves providing an account of the reporting entity's use of, and command over, economic resources. The Statement therefore bases its definitions on flows and prospective flows of future economic benefits embodied in economic resources.
IASB 2010	To properly assess the prospects for future cash flows from the reporting entity, users need to be able to distinguish between both of these changes. OB16 Information about a reporting entity's financial performance helps users to understand the return that the entity has produced on its economic resources
IASB 2015	To assess an entity s prospects for future net cash inflows, help existing and potential investors, lenders and other creditors make those assessments, they need information about: (a) the resources of the entity , claims against the entity , and changes in those resources and claims (see paragraphs 1. 12 1. 21); and (b) how efficiently and effectively the entity s management and governing board7 have discharged their responsibilities to use the entity's resources.

Foresee	Examples
FASB 78-85	Information that was not known previously about a past activity clearly reduces uncertainty about its outcome, and information about past activities is usually an indispensable point of departure for attempts to foresee the consequences of related future activities. Disclosure requirements almost always have the dual purpose of helping to predict and confirming or correcting earlier predictions.
IASB 1989	The financial statements are normally prepared on the assumption that an entity is a going concern and will continue in operation for the foreseeable future. Hence, it is assumed that the entity has neither the intention nor the need to liquidate or curtail materially the scale of its operations; if such an intention or need exists, the financial statements may have to be prepared on a different basis and , if so , the basis used is disclosed
ASB 1999	When preparing financial statements, it is usually most relevant to assume that the reporting entity is to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. It does not follow from this assumption, however , that , in preparing financial statements

	, the entity should be treated as being obliged to adopt a course of action that will enable it to continue in operational existence.
IASB 2010	The financial statements are normally prepared on the assumption that an entity is a going concern and will continue in operation for the foreseeable future.
IASB 2015	The assumption that the reporting entity is a going concern and will continue in operation for the foreseeable future. A measure that provides monetary information about assets , liabilities , income and expenses using information derived from the transaction or event that created them.

Hindsight	Examples
FASB 78-85	For example, the use of financial models to predict business failures looks quite successful judged in the light of hindsight by looking at the financial history of failed firms during their last declining years. The presence or absence of future economic benefit that can be obtained and controlled by the enterprise or of the enterprise 's legal, equitable, or constructive obligation to sacrifice assets in the future can often be discerned reliably only with hindsight
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	N/A
IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	N/A

Unforeseeen	Examples
FASB 78-85	For one thing, a markedly unexpected effect on business behaviour may point to an unforeseen deficiency in a standard in the sense that it does not result in the faithful representation of economic phenomena that was intended. It would then be necessary for the standard to be revised
IASB	N/A

1989	
ASB 1999	N/A
IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	N/A

Regard	Examples
FASB 78-85	The Board 's responsibility is to the integrity of the financial reporting system, which it **regards** as its paramount concern. Consistency in applying accounting methods over a span of time has always been **regarded** as an important quality that makes accounting numbers more useful. Hence, to the extent that verification depends on consensus, it may not always be those measurement methods widely regarded as "objective" that are most verifiable.
IASB 1989	Gains represent increases in economic benefits and as such are no different in nature from revenue. Hence, they are not regarded as constituting a separate element in this Framework. In some countries, such provisions are not regarded as liabilities because the concept of a liability is defined narrowly so as to include only amounts that can be established without the need to make estimates.
ASB 1999	The Statement envisages that, if the current value basis of measurement is regarded as the most appropriate measurement basis for a particular category of assets, all assets within that category will be recognised at their current value Although it is possible that this work may result in changes needing to be made to what is said in the Statement that does not create a difficulty because the Board does not regard the Statement as its final word on the principles that underlie financial reporting. The Statement regards the entity view as providing the most useful information, and therefore uses control to determine the boundary of a reporting entity
IASB 2010	In assessing whether an item meets these criteria and therefore qualifies for recognition in the financial statements, regard needs to be given to the materiality considerations discussed in Chapter 3 Qualitative characteristics of useful financial information

| IASB 2015 | It is a prerequisite for distinguishing between an entity s return on capital and its return of capital; only inflows of assets in excess of amounts needed to maintain capital may be regarded as profit and therefore as a return on capital

When the concept of financial capital maintenance is defined in terms of constant purchasing power units profit represents the increase in invested purchasing power over the period. Thus, only that part of the increase in the prices of assets that exceeds the increase in the general level of prices is regarded as profit. |
|---|---|

Aware	Examples
FASB 78-85	Ultimately, a standard-setting body has to do its best to meet the needs of society as a whole when it promulgates a standard that sacrifices one of those qualities for the other; and it must also be aware constantly of the calculus of costs and benefits.
IASB 1989	Furthermore, the costs do not necessarily fall on those users who enjoy the benefits. Benefits may also be enjoyed by users other than those for whom the information is prepared; for example, the provision of further information to lenders may reduce the borrowing costs of an entity. For these reasons, it is difficult to apply a cost-benefit test in any particular case. Nevertheless, standard-setters in particular, as well as the preparers and users of financial statements should be aware of this constraint.
ASB 1999	Although it is sometimes suggested that the legal position is that a company's annual financial statements are prepared for its shareholders only, neither companies legislation nor, so far as the Board is aware, case law suggests that the courts should or would take such a view.
IASB 2010	The fundamental qualitative characteristics are relevance and faithful representation. Relevant financial information is capable of making a difference in the decisions made by users. Information may be capable of making a difference in a decision even if some users choose not to take advantage of it or are already aware of it from other sources.
IASB 2015	Relevant financial information is capable of making a difference in the decisions made by users. Information may be capable of making a difference in a decision even if some users choose not to take advantage of it or are already aware of it from other sources. Financial information is capable of making a difference in decisions if it has predictive value, confirmatory value or both.

Some metaphors are exclusive to the UK ASB (1999) Statement of Principles.

Guise	Examples
FASB 78-85	N/A

IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	The realisation notion originally came into use in order to protect creditors from the uncertainties that arise in accruals accounting, and its purpose was to try to ensure that profits were not overstated and that there was sufficient cash available to distribute those profits without the company becoming insolvent. In this guise, the notion was understood to involve the conversion into cash of non-cash resources and rights to cash.
IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	N/A

Envisage	Examples
FASB 78-85	N/A
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999 (13 occurrences)	This means that the Statement does not use the notion of matching as the main driver of the recognition process. Nevertheless, the statement envisages that: (a) if the future economic benefits embodied in the asset are eliminated at a single point in time, it is at that point that the asset will be derecognised and a loss recognised ; and(b) if the future economic benefits are eliminated over several accounting periods typically because they are being consumed over a period of time the cost of the asset that comprises the future economic benefits will be recognised as a loss in the performance statement over those accounting periods. The Statement therefore envisages that the mixed measurement system will be used and it focuses on the mix of historical cost and current value to be adopted. In doing so , it describes a framework that would guide the choice of basis for each category of assets or liabilities.
IASB 2010	N/A

IASB 2015	N/A

Vision	Examples
FASB 78-85	N/A
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	N/A
IASB 2010	The concepts are the goal towards which the Board and preparers of financial reports strive. As with most goals, the Conceptual Framework's vision of ideal financial reporting is unlikely to be achieved in full, at least not in the short term, because it takes time to understand, accept and implement new ways of analysing transactions and other events. Nevertheless, establishing a goal towards which to strive is essential if financial reporting is to evolve so as to improve its usefulness.
IASB 2015	N/A

Outlook	Examples
FASB 78-85	N/A
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	N/A
IASB	However, general purpose financial reports do not and can not provide all of the information that existing and potential investors, lenders and other creditors need.

2010	Those users need to consider pertinent information from other sources, for example, general economic conditions and expectations, political events and political climate, and industry and company outlooks.
IASB 2015	N/A

Forward looking	Examples
FASB 78-85	N/A
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	N/A
IASB 2010	Some financial reports also include explanatory material about management's expectations and strategies for the reporting entity, and other types of forward-looking information.
IASB 2015	N/A

Visible	Examples
FASB 78-85	N/A
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	N/A

IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	Consequently, judgement is required when deciding whether to recognise an item and recognition requirements may need to vary between Standards. If an item meeting the definition of an element is not recognised, disclosures may be needed. It is important to consider how to make such disclosures sufficiently visible to compensate for the absence of the item from the summary provided by the statement of financial position or the statement(s) of financial performance.

Horizon	Examples
FASB 78-85	N/A
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	N/A
IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	Consequently, judgement is required when deciding whether to recognise an item and recognition requirements may need to vary between Standards. 5. 11 If an item meeting the definition of an element is not recognised, disclosures may be needed . It is important to consider how to make such disclosures sufficiently visible to compensate for the absence of the item from the summary provided by the statement of financial position or the statement(s) of financial performance.

In this part, vision metaphors associated with knowledge are provided. Similar to the above, the submerged Knowledge metaphors are presented.

Knowledge: Submerged Vision Metaphors

In FASB 78-85

Knowing	Recognize/recognition	352	*gno	To know
	Diagnosis	3	*gno	To know
Total		355		

IASB 1989

Knowing	Recognize/recognition	81	*gno	To know
Total		81		

ASB 1999

Knowing	Recognize/recognition	204	*gno	To know
	Acknowledge	5	*gno	To know
Total		209		

IASB 2010

Knowing	Recognize/recognition	75	*gno	To know
	Acknowledge	1	*gno	To know
	Derecognize	1	*gno	To know
Total		77		

IASB 2015

Knowing	Recognize/recognition	157	*gno	to know
Total		157		

Re-cognition	Examples
FASB 78-85	All practical financial accounting and reporting models **have limitations.** The preceding paragraphs describe one limit that may affect various models, how recognition or measurement considerations stemming from uncertainty may result in not recognizing **as** assets or liabilities. Some items that qualify as such under the definitions or may result in postponing recognition of some assets or liabilities **until their existence** becomes more probable or their measures becomes more reliable.
IASB 1989	Information may be relevant but so unreliable in nature or representation that its recognition may be potentially misleading. For example, if the validity and amount of a claim for damages under a legal action are disputed, it may be inappropriate for the entity to recognise the full amount of the claim in the balance sheet, although it may be appropriate to disclose the amount and circumstances of the claim.
ASB 1999	A transaction or other event is faithfully represented in the financial statements if the **way in which it** is recognised, measured and **presented** in those statements **corresponds closely** to the effect of that transaction or event. The recognition criteria described will **filter out** those liabilities that involve too much uncertainty to be recognised in the primary financial statements.
IASB 2010	Items that satisfy the recognition criteria should be recognised in the balance sheet or income statement. The failure to recognise such items is not rectified by disclosure of the accounting policies used nor by notes or explanatory material. An item that meets the definition of an element should be recognised **if**: (a) it is probable that any future economic benefit associated with the item will flow to or from the entity; and (b) the item has a cost or value that can be measured with reliability.
IASB 2015	Recognition is the process of capturing, for inclusion in the statement of financial position or the statement(s) of financial performance, an item that meets the definition of an element. It involves depicting the item (either alone or as part of a line item) in words and by a monetary amount, and including that amount in totals in the relevant statement.

Diagnosis	Examples
FASB 78-85	The ability to **explain phenomen**a often depends on the diagnosis of the **underlying causes** of differences or the **discovery** that apparent differences are without significance.

IASB 1989	N/A			
ASB 1999	N/A			
IASB 2010	N/A			
IASB 2015	N/A			

Existing: Submerged Vision Metaphors

In FASB 1978-85

Existence	Represent/Representation	137	*es	to be
	Realisation/realised/realisable	55	*sta	to exist
	Essence	10	*es	to be
	Misrepresent	3	*es	to be
	Presentation/Present	1	*es	to be
Total		206		

In IASB 1989

Existence	Represent/Representation	25	*es	to be
	Realisation/realised/realisable	2	*sta	to exist
	Presentation/Present	11	*es	to be
	Unrealised	2	*sta	to exist
Total		40		

In ASB 1999

Existence	Represent/Representation	46	*es	to be
	Realisation/realised/realisable	32	*sta	to exist
	Presentation/Present	70	*es	to be
	Misrepresent	3	*es	to be
	Unrealised	5	*sta	to exist
Total		156		

IASB 2010

Existence	Represent/Representation	97	*es	to be
	Realisation/realised/realisable	2	*sta	to exist
	Presentation/Present	35	*es	to be
Total		134		

IASB 2015

Existence	Representation	100	*es	to be
	Presentation/Present	49	*es	to be
	Misrepresent	1	*es	to be
	Presentation/Present	40	*es	to be
	Realize	1	*sta	to exist
Total		191		

Re-presentation	Examples
FASB 78-85	Real things and events that affect a dynamic and complex business enterprise are represented in financial statements by words and numbers, which are necessarily **highly simplified symbols of the real thing.** Real transactions and other events are voluminous and are interpreted, combined, and condensed to be reflected in financial statements.
IASB 1989	To be reliable, information must **represent faithfully** the transactions and other events it either purports to represent or could reasonably be expected to represent. Thus, for example, a balance sheet should represent faithfully the transactions and other events that result in assets, liabilities and equity of the entity at the reporting date which meet *the* recognition criteria
ASB 1999	Information is reliable if: **(a) it can be depended upon by users to represent faithfully what it either purports to represent or could reasonably be expected to represent, and therefore reflects the substance of the transactions and other events that have taken place; (b) it is free from deliberate or systematic bias and material error and is complete; and (c) in its preparation under conditions of uncertainty a degree of caution has been applied in exercising the necessary judgements.**
IASB 2010	Financial reports represent economic phenomena in words and numbers. To be useful, financial information must not only represent relevant phenomena, but it must also faithfully represent the phenomena that it purports to represent. To be a perfectly faithful representation, a depiction would have three characteristics. *It would be complete, neutral and free from error.*
IASB 2015	Faithful representation of assets liabilities, equity, income and expenses involves not only recognition, but also the measurement, presentation and disclosure of information about the items recognised (see Chapters 6 7). Hence , when assessing whether the recognition of an asset or a liability can provide a faithful representation of the asset or the liability , it is necessary to consider not merely its description and measurement on the face of the statement of financial position , but also : (a) (b) IFRS Foundation the depiction of resulting income , expenses or equity ; for example , if an entity acquires an asset in exchange for consideration , the failure to recognise the asset would result in an expense and reduce the entity s profit and equity.

Realisation	Examples
FASB 78-85	Realization in **the most precise sense** means the process of converting noncash resources and rights into money and is most precisely used in accounting and financial reporting to refer to sales of assets for cash or claims to cash.
IASB 1989	There is no such explanation of the realization principle in the IASB 1989 – There are 4 instances of anything remotely close to realisation.

	The definition of income also includes unrealised gains; for example, those arising on the revaluation of marketable securities and those resulting from increases in the carrying amount of long-term assets
ASB 1999	The realisation notion is one means of determining whether the existence of a gain is reasonably certain. **However, in the Boards view, it is not necessarily the best way**. The **realisation** notion originally came into use in order to protect creditors from the uncertainties that arise in accruals accounting, and its purpose was to try to ensure that profits were not overstated and that there was sufficient cash available to distribute those profits without the company becoming insolvent.
IASB 2010	*Similar to the 1989 framework, there is no explanation of the realisation principle.
IASB 2015	To produce relevant information, it is important to consider the following factors when selecting a measurement basis for an asset or a liability and the related income and expenses: (a) how that asset or liability contributes to future cash flows. This will depend in part on the nature of the business activities conducted by the entity. For example, if a property is realised by sale, it will produce cash flows from that sale, but if a property is used in combination with other assets to produce goods and services, it will help produce cash flows from the sale of those goods and services.

Essence	Examples
FASB 78- 85	Business enterprises are in essence resource or asset processors, and a resource 's capacity to be exchanged for cash or other resources or to be combined with other resources to produce exchangeable goods or services gives it utility and value (future economic benefit) to an enterprise.

Future economic benefit is the **essence** of an asset

The **essence** of a liability is a duty or requirement to sacrifice assets in the future |
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	Capacity to obtain future economic benefits is the essence of an asset and is common to all assets irrespective of their form
IASB 2010	N/A
IASB	N/A

2015	

Misrepresent	Examples
FASB 78-85	Verification contributes little or nothing toward insuring that measures used are relevant to the decisions for which the information is intended to be useful. Measurer bias is a less complex concept than measurement bias. In its simplest form, it arises from intentional misrepresentation.
IASB 1989	N/A
ASB 1999	Disclosure of information in the notes to the financial statements is not a substitute for recognition and does not correct or justify any misrepresentation or omission in the primary financial statements.
IASB 2010	N/A
IASB 2015	Because the component that has been transferred must or may be reacquired, derecognising it may misrepresent the extent of the change in the entity s financial position.

Presentation	Examples
FASB 78-85	The captions and numbers in financial statements present **a "picture" of a business enterprise** and many of its external and internal relationships more rigorously more informatively, in fact than a simple description of it.
IASB 1989	Most financial information is subject to some risk of being less than a faithful representation of that which it purports to portray. This is not due to bias, but rather to **inherent difficulties either in identifying the transactions and other events to be measured** or in devising and applying measurement and **presentation techniques** that can convey messages that correspond with those transactions and events.
ASB 1999	In deciding which information to include in financial statements, when to include it and how to present it, the aim is to ensure that financial statements yield information that is useful.
IASB 2010	The purpose of the Conceptual Framework is: (a) to assist the Board in the development of future IFRSs and in its review of existing IFRSs; (b) to assist the Board in promoting harmonisation of regulations, accounting standards and procedures relating to the presentation of financial statements by providing a basis for reducing the number of alternative accounting treatments permitted by IFRSs

	A neutral depiction is **without bias** in the selection or presentation of financial information
IASB 2015	An identified feature of an item being measured (for example , historical cost , fair value or fulfilment value) . Uncertainty that arises when the result of applying a measurement basis is imprecise and can be determined only with a range. Without bias in the selection or presentation of financial information. A neutral depiction is not slanted, weighted, emphasised, de-emphasised or otherwise manipulated to increase the probability that financial information will be received favourably or unfavourably by users.