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# On Pictorially mediated mind-object relations\*

Jessica Pepp

Department of Philosophy, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

## ABSTRACT

When I see a tree through my window, that particular worldly tree is said to be ‘in’, ‘on’, or ‘before’ my mind. My ordinary visual link to it is ‘intentional’. How similar to this link are the links between me and particular worldly trees when I see them in photographs, or in paintings? Are they, in some important sense, links of the same kind? Or are they links of importantly different kinds? Or, as a third possibility, are they at once links of the same important kind and also links of importantly different sub-kinds within that kind? This paper takes up these taxonomical questions. After fleshing out (a bit) the characterisation of these different subject-object links, I explain and expand upon an approach to answering the taxonomical questions originally set out by Kendall Walton. I then follow this approach a certain distance, connecting it with the question of how to mark the boundary between perception and cognition. My investigations support the conclusion that the three types of links just described are not importantly different in kind.

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## 1. Introduction

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**CONTACT** Jessica Pepp  [jessica.pepp@filosofi.uu.se](mailto:jessica.pepp@filosofi.uu.se)  Department of Philosophy, Uppsala University, Postal Box 627, 751 26 Uppsala, Sweden

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trees when I see them in photographs, or in paintings? Are they, in some important sense, links of the same kind? Or are they links of importantly different kinds? Or, as a third possibility, are they at once links of the same important kind and also links of importantly different sub-kinds within that kind? This paper takes up these taxonomical questions.

After fleshing out (a bit) the characterisation of these different subject-object links (section 2), I will explain and expand upon an approach to answering the taxonomical questions that was originally set out by Kendall Walton (section 3). I will then develop this approach, connecting it with the question of how to mark the boundary between perception and cognition (sections 4–5). My investigations support the conclusion that the three types of links just described are not importantly different in kind. The conclusion is preliminary. Even so, the structure of the investigations provides a framework for making headway on the problem of how to fit the apprehension of objects through pictures into a broader understanding of how we perceive and think about the world.

## **2. Three types of relation between subjects and worldly objects**

Right now, as I write, I periodically look out the window and see a tree that stands just outside. It is that tree in particular, and not some other tree, that ‘enters’ and remains for some duration ‘in’, ‘on’, or ‘before’ my mind through this visual process. Here I use scare quotes to acknowledge that there is no movement of the tree from its spot on the ground outside to the inner sanctum of my mind. It is difficult to describe the relevant kind of relation between me and the tree without the use of spatial metaphor. These relations are often described as a subject’s being in a mental state that is ‘of’ or ‘about’ the object, or as ‘intentional’ relations between a subject and an object. I hope the reader has some feel for this notion and agrees that seeing a particular tree is one way to be linked to that tree in this sort of way. Let me call this kind of link an ‘ordinary visual link’.

Now, on the other side of my room there is a photograph of a different tree, one that does not stand anywhere near my current location and may, for all I know, have been cut down years ago. I periodically look at the photograph and see that tree in the photograph. Let me call the kind of link that obtains between me and that particular worldly tree when I see it in the photograph a ‘photographic link’. This is a type of relation that obtains between a subject and an object when the subject sees the image surface of a photograph in whose production the object played an appropriate role.

There is obviously some fuzziness in this gloss. First, our ordinary talk of seeing things in photographs is, like most talk about seeing, flexible. We often say that we do not see an object in a photograph if we fail to notice, recognise, discriminate, or correctly classify it. But I intend the category of photographic links to be broad enough that such links can obtain even if the subject fails to recognise, classify, notice, or discriminate the object. Second, it is not straightforward to articulate exactly what the appropriate role is that objects must play in the production of photographs. I will not attempt to do so here. Despite its looseness, I hope, once again, that the gloss gives the reader a feel for the category.

On a different wall of my room hangs a watercolour painting that my father did of a tree that used to stand in a public park near my childhood home. That tree *was* cut down many years ago. As with the tree outside and the tree in the photograph, my eyes occasionally fall on this painting, and I see the tree in the painting. Let me call the kind of link that obtains between me and that particular worldly tree when I see it in the painting a 'pictorial link'.<sup>1</sup> A pictorial link is a type of relation that obtains between a subject and an object when the subject sees the image surface of a handmade picture (e.g. painting, drawing) in whose production the object played an appropriate role.

This might seem even fuzzier than the gloss of 'photographic link' because playing an appropriate role in the production of a painting or drawing seems much more flexible than playing an appropriate role in the production of a photograph. It might seem that an artist can make a painting of any particular object she wishes, and articulating what role an object must play in the formation of an intention to depict it introduces new layers of difficulty. Perhaps an object need not play any role at all in an intention to depict it, if an artist can intend to depict something by singling it out in a purely descriptive manner.

But in fact, such questions about depiction concern photographic links as well. A photograph in whose production a particular present-day human actor plays the relevant role may depict Aristotle, and if so then Aristotle may also play an important role in its production. To keep things manageable, I will limit 'pictorial links' to links between subjects and objects that go via pictures made on the basis of artists' ordinary visual links, memories derived from ordinary visual links, or photographic links to those objects. And I will limit 'photographic links' to links between

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<sup>1</sup>By using this label I do not mean to suggest that photographs are not also pictures. It is just easier than using a label like 'handmade-pictorial link'.

subjects and objects that go via the subject seeing the image surface of a photograph that was produced by those objects reflecting light through or blocking light from entering the lens of a camera.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Walton's taxonomy

Kendall Walton (1984) has claimed that ordinary visual links and photographic links are of the same important kind, that pictorial links are not of that kind, and that ordinary visual links and photographic links are not of importantly different sub-kinds. Walton's initial way of putting the point was that photographs are 'transparent': we see the things we see in photographs just as much as we see the things we see face to face. By contrast, he claimed, handmade pictures are not transparent: we do not really see the things we 'see' in drawings and paintings.

Walton did not give a positive argument for the thesis that photographs are 'transparent' in this sense. Instead, he issued a 'slippery slope'-style challenge to those who would deny it. Why, if we really see things through windows, eyeglasses, and mirrors, do we not also see them through closed circuit television monitors? And if we do, why do we not also see things through broadcast television, video recordings, and still photographs? The challenge was to come up with a necessary condition on genuinely seeing a thing that ruled out genuinely seeing the things we see in photographs, but did not rule out genuinely seeing the things we see through windows, eyeglasses, and mirrors.

Skepticism that this challenge can be met is one part of Walton's view. The other is what I will call his 'anti-transparency thesis': that we do not genuinely see the things we see in (most)<sup>3</sup> handmade pictures. To support the anti-transparency thesis, Walton proposed a necessary condition on genuinely seeing a thing which, according to him, is met by seeing things in photographs but not by seeing things in handmade pictures. This is the condition that the counterfactual dependence of one's perceptual experience on the features of the objects perceived not itself

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<sup>2</sup>Still, complications abound. For example, a photograph might be produced by taking a photograph of another photograph. On the gloss I have just given, it is not clear whether, if the photograph in my room was produced in this way, looking at it would give me a photographic link to that particular tree, or only to the preceding photograph. It depends on what exactly is meant by 'was produced by'. The same sort of question arises if my father's watercolour was a copy of another painting. Would it give me a pictorial link to the particular tree that my father saw in the predecessor painting? Perhaps the thing to say is that photographic and pictorial links can be of different levels: a level 1 link involves just a single picture, a level 2 link involves a picture of a picture, and so on. We can then say that the generic uses of 'photographic link' and 'pictorial link' encompass such links of any level.

<sup>3</sup>Walton allows that we might see objects through some 'automatically' produced handmade pictures, such as absent-minded doodles. See note 6.

be due to anyone's beliefs or intentions. The objects perceived must cause the experience in a 'purely mechanical manner' (1984, 261). Seeing things in handmade pictures (typically) fails to satisfy this condition, Walton claimed, because when there is counterfactual dependence between one's visual experience in looking at a handmade picture and the features of the objects depicted, this is due to the artist's beliefs that the object looked a certain way and her intentions to depict it in that way. By contrast, although photographers' attitudes and intentions are involved in framing a scene, the counterfactual dependence between the experience of seeing the photograph and the features of the photographed objects does not depend on them.<sup>4</sup>

Many writers have taken up Walton's slippery slope challenge, and his anti-transparency thesis has also been questioned.<sup>5</sup> The frame for all of this discussion has been the question of what is required in order to see (or perceive) an object. On the basis of different answers to this question, discussants argue that photographic and pictorial links to objects are or are not genuine instances of seeing (or perceiving) them.

But as Walton has noted, the debate risks becoming terminological. Necessary conditions on seeing or perceiving may be formulated in accord with different writers' intuitions about the application of the words 'see' and 'perceive'. Disagreements about whether a condition is really necessary or not may result from different ways of using the words. To avoid this, Walton has more recently expressed his position roughly in the way I did above:

- (I) There is a natural kind which includes seeing photographs of things [i.e. photographic links] as well as seeing them directly [ordinary visual links] and through mirrors and telescopes, and so forth, but not seeing handmade pictures of them [pictorial links].
- (II) There is not a natural kind, not a very significant one anyway, comprising seeing things directly [ordinary visual links] and through mirrors and telescopes, and so on, but excluding seeing photographs [photographic links] as well as handmade pictures of them [pictorial links].

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<sup>4</sup>As Walton emphasises in his (2008), this claim about photographs, made in 1984, applied to film photographs. Even then, Walton noted that some film photographs could be rendered non-transparent, or less transparent, with sufficient darkroom manipulation. He now seems to think that digital photographs are not transparent if they have undergone sufficient manipulation, and that the ubiquity of digital manipulation techniques has made our experiences of photographs in general more like our experiences of handmade pictures in that we have a reduced sense of transparency.

<sup>5</sup>On answering Walton's challenge, see, for example: Currie (1991), Carroll (1996), Friday (1996), Cohen and Meskin (2004), Meskin and Cohen (2008), and Nanay (2010). For rejections of the anti-transparency thesis, see Currie (1991), Lopes (2003), and Yetter-Chappell (2018).

(2008, 111–112, bracketed insertions to put the claims in my terminology.)

Walton favours characterising the natural kind referred to in (I) as seeing, but he makes clear, even in his original paper, that this is not important:

I repeat that my point needn't be made in terms of vision or perception. One might prefer to introduce a new notion, to speak of *being 'in contact with'* things, for instance, when one either sees them with the naked eye or sees mirror images or photographs or fossils or footprints of them-but not when one sees drawings of them. (1984, 275 note 13, emphasis added)

One advantage of characterising the natural kind referred to in (I) as *seeing* is that seeing is a familiar notion – people know, or feel that they know, what is meant by talk of seeing objects. Of course, this is also the problem with characterising the natural kind as *seeing*: since people know, or feel that they know, what seeing is, discussion may focus on whether or not photographic links fit within the concept of seeing as they understand it. Walton's suggested new notion of *being in contact*, which appears frequently in his writings on photographic transparency, escapes the problem but lacks the advantage of familiarity.

In arguing for (I), Walton appeals to a certain kind of emotional reaction to photographs that might be described as *feeling in contact* with a thing. He asks us to consider our reaction, first, to etchings from Goya's *The Disasters of War*, picturing the horrors of conflicts between Spain and the Napoleonic Empire, versus, second, to O'Sullivan's photograph, *Death on a Misty Morning*, of dead men on a battlefield of the American Civil War. The feeling given by the latter of 'actually seeing' (as we might put it), or being presented with, the particular bodies of particular dead men is, we are invited to agree, especially jarring. For a less upsetting example, one might consider Daguerre's (c. 1839) daguerreotype *Boulevard du Temple*, in which a shoe shiner can be seen shining a man's shoes on the street corner. It is said to be the first photograph of human beings, and (especially with this fact in mind) one can get a chill thinking that one is 'looking at' two particular men (as Bertrand Russell might have said: actual men with tailors and bank accounts) going about their business on the streets of Paris nearly two centuries ago. In looking at the photograph, one feels in contact with these particular men.

It is important to distinguish *feeling in contact* (a certain type of phenomenology) from *being in contact* (a certain type of relation to an object). Suppose it turned out that *Boulevard du Temple* is really a hyper-realist painting of an imaginary scene. Then in looking at the picture one is

not in fact in contact with two particular men, even though one feels that way. Similarly, if one hallucinates a pink elephant, one may feel in contact with a particular pink elephant, but one is not in fact in contact with any such creature. So Walton cannot move directly from the claim that ordinary visual links and photographic links, but not pictorial links, produce a *feeling of being in contact* with particular objects to the conclusion that ordinary visual links and photographic links, but not pictorial links, constitute *being in contact* with particular objects.<sup>6</sup>

However, exploration of this *feeling* of being in contact could shed light on what, exactly, it is a feeling of – on what it is to be in contact with an object. One question about the phenomenology of contact is what role a subject's beliefs play in it. Walton takes beliefs to play an important role, claiming that the feeling of contact is lessened when we discover (i.e. come to believe) that we are looking at a hyperrealistic painting rather than a photograph (1984, 90–91). Beliefs about the aetiology of a picture might contribute to the phenomenology of looking at it by altering perceptual phenomenology (either by changing perceptual attention or by what is often called 'cognitive penetration' of perceptual experience), or by contributing their own distinctive phenomenology (often called 'cognitive phenomenology') to the total phenomenology of looking at the picture. Walton is not specific on these matters. Scott Walden (2016) thinks beliefs do not have a role to play in the phenomenology of contact – at least, not in the perceptual phenomenology of contact. According to Walden, the perceptual part of the feeling of contact depends on 'the character of the marked surface and associated proximal stimuli only', and is unaffected by changes in one's beliefs about how the picture came to be (40–41). Still, Walden thinks that subjects' beliefs about their warrant for various beliefs they might form on the basis of seeing a picture (e.g. the belief that the man getting his shoe shined had one knee

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<sup>6</sup>Scott Walden (2016, 36–38) makes much the same point in a different way. He notes that Walton also saw the point, and responded to it by claiming that in cases like my hypothetical one in which Boulevard du Temple is really a fanciful painting, the viewer suffers an illusion. Walden understands Walton to be suggesting that part of what is illusory is the feeling of contact itself, such that the viewer does not really have a feeling of contact, but only the illusion of having a feeling of contact. Walden argues, and I agree, that this is unmotivated—the feeling of contact is real. It seems to me, however, that Walton's claim is not that the feeling of contact is illusory (i.e., not real), but that the contact which one feels oneself to have is illusory (not real). Conversely, Walton seems to allow that some handmade pictures which, presumably, do not produce a strong feeling of contact, such as 'doodles done automatically, while the doodler's mind is on other things', nonetheless are transparent, i.e., provide contact. (267) In any case, the point stands—I think Walden and I agree on this—that there is space between establishing similarities or differences in feelings of being in contact, and establishing similarities or differences in actual contact. Walton also seems to have recognised this, but did not always make the distinction explicit.

bent) are associated with a certain non-perceptual (perhaps: cognitive) phenomenology (47).

A different question, independent of the role of belief, is how to characterise the phenomenology of contact. To use the standard phrasing: What is the feeling *like*? One feature of the feeling of being in contact is that it is *particular*. Phenomenological particularity is an often noted feature of ordinary visual experience: it is part of what it is like for me to look at the tree out my window that *that tree* (not just some tree or other) seems thus and so.<sup>7</sup> My visual experience is *particular* with respect to the tree. This, it seems to me, is shared with my experience of looking at my photograph of a tree. In doing so, I am presented with *that tree* (not just some tree or other) seeming thus and so. As I foreshadowed in the discussion above, this particularity is part of what is striking about photographs. In looking at O'Sullivan's photograph, I am presented with *these particular dead men* (not just some dead men or others); in looking at *Boulevard du Temple*, I am presented with *these particular long-ago people*.

Particularity is not the whole of it, though. It is also part of what my experience is like that these particular objects (or people) seem to be reaching me visually, in much the way that the tree outside my window reaches me visually. It does not seem that I need to recognise them, or know who they are, or connect names to them, in order for it to be they, in particular, who are before my mind. They are just there, given to me by the photograph, as they would be if I saw them outside the window.

So the feeling of being in contact with something is the feeling of being reached in this way by a particular object. We might then take actually being in contact with something to be the state of actually being reached in this way by a particular object. What is this way of being reached? For one thing, it requires an object coming to be before (or in, on) one's mind. To be reached by an object in this way is to get into what I earlier called a mental or intentional relation to it. For another thing, assuming that the way the tree outside my window reaches me visually is by means of a causal process with direction *from* the tree *to* me, being reached seems to require an object-to-subject causal process. (For instance, if A sees B, the causation of certain mental activity in A by B's reflection of light constitutes A's being in contact with B, but not B's

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<sup>7</sup>For discussion, see (e.g.) Montague (2012) and Martin (2002).

being in contact with A.) And, it seems that this process must carry some sort of information about the object.<sup>8</sup>

Walton makes claims along these lines about what is required for a subject-object relation to be one of contact. He adds a further requirement on contact designed to secure his anti-transparency thesis (i.e. the 'but' clause in (I)). This is the requirement (described in section 3) that the subject's mental activity or experience must not be dependent on anyone's beliefs. It is not clear how this requirement is suggested either by the phenomenology of contact or even by ordinary notions of seeing. Indeed, both Gregory Currie (1991, 24) and Helen Yetter-Chappell (2018) point out that if we accept that subjects could see objects using elaborate visual prostheses, then it is not clear why we should deny that such prostheses might make use of information supplied by people's beliefs, as long as the process were broadly reliable. Since vision using such prostheses is intuitively not importantly different from ordinary vision, seeing objects by means of them seems to be a clear case of contact, despite the intervention of beliefs.

Walton's motivation for ruling out pictorial links from being relations of contact is that he finds that the *feeling* of contact in looking at photographs is best observed by comparing it with the lack of such a feeling that is typical of looking at handmade pictures. It is true that many handmade pictures do not produce the feeling of being reached by a particular object in the way that photographs do. Instead, our experience in seeing them often seems quite general: e.g. one seems to be seeing a girl in front of a house, rather than *that particular girl* in front of *that particular house*. And indeed, many handmade pictures do not put us in contact with any particular objects, because they are pure products of an artist's imagination that do not capture any actual, particular objects. But such pictures are not suited to create pictorial links, according to the gloss I gave in section 2. Those that do create pictorial links are no less able to give viewers contact with objects than photographs. Viewers may get a greater feeling of contact from photographs or hyperrealistic handmade pictures than from other types of handmade pictures. But once it is appreciated what this feeling of contact is a feeling of, it can be seen that this – the contact itself – can be present

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<sup>8</sup>How much information about the object needs to be carried for a link to constitute contact with it? One might wonder whether a sufficiently bad drawing or a sufficiently fuzzy, badly exposed photograph would provide contact with the objects it is of. Walton seems to think that such photographs do provide contact, (1984, 273) and Yetter-Chappell (2018, section 4) argues that there is no reason in principle to exclude even drawings carrying very rudimentary information about objects from enabling one to see those objects. This is because, intuitively, objects need not be seen especially accurately or with much detail in order to be seen even in the ordinary way. For present purposes, I will also adopt this liberalism about the information-carrying that is required for contact.

even when it is not so strongly felt. A useful comparison might be with cases in which subjects take themselves to be imagining non-particular objects but are in fact seeing particular objects. For instance, someone doing a mindfulness exercise might try to visualise a glow of warm light to her right and not realise that there really is such a light. Her experience may not seem to her to be particular with respect to the light, but she is in contact with it nonetheless.

So it is not clear why, if photographic links are members of the kind *contact*, pictorial links would not also be. This undercuts the exclusion of pictorial links from the natural kind uniting ordinary visual links and photographic links, assuming that one accepts that there is such a natural kind. To reflect this, I will change Walton's (I) to

- (i) There is a natural kind which includes photographic links and pictorial links as well as ordinary visual links.

And, for ease of reference, I will match it with a rewrite of (II) using the terminology of links:

- (ii) There is not a natural kind, not a very significant one anyway, comprising ordinary visual links, but excluding photographic links as well as pictorial links.

In the remainder of the paper, I will make a preliminary case for accepting both (i) and (ii). I will do this by exploring, and casting doubt on, the options for rejecting them. Assuming that ordinary visual links are included in any natural kind at all, (ii) entails (i). Thus, the options are to accept (i) but reject (ii), or to reject both (i) and (ii). I will look at the first option in the next section, and the second in section 5.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Yetter-Chappell (2018) argues that both photographic links and pictorial links can be relations of seeing between subjects and particular worldly objects. Hence, she might also be seen as arguing for the conjunction of (i) and (ii). Her approach differs from mine in that she focuses on our ordinary notion of seeing. She develops and strengthens Walton's slippery slope argument that along the progression from ordinary seeing to seeing through mirrors to seeing through video screens to seeing through photographs, we find no principled place to switch from counting a subject-object relation as seeing to not counting it as seeing. She also extends the slippery slope argument to include certain cases of seeing things through handmade pictures, and defends the transparency thesis against attempts to provide necessary conditions on seeing that 'seeing' through photographs does not meet. She does this by developing cases that seem to be (uncontroversially, or at least less controversially) cases of seeing while also failing to meet the proposed conditions.

By contrast, my approach is to take up Walton's suggestion that we not assume that our ordinary notion(s) of seeing capture the natural kind that unites ordinary visual links and photographic links. Instead, I focus on trying to understand what this kind—I follow Walton in calling it 'contact'—would have to be like, and how it might or might not divide into important sub-kinds.

#### 4. Different kinds of contact: perception versus cognition

To accept (i) while rejecting (ii) is to accept an important commonality between ordinary visual links and photographic links – both are forms of contact with objects – while maintaining that they are importantly different kinds of contact. As Walton notes, this position seems attributable to many of Walton’s critics, who leave his claim (I) unchallenged but focus on rejecting his claim (II). The usual approach is to argue that while ordinary visual links fall under the natural kind of *seeing*, photographic links do not. Something that does not come up in these discussions – presumably because claim (I) (or (i)) and Walton’s contact-based defense of it are not the focus – is what kind of contact with objects *is* provided by photographic links, if not visual/perceptual contact.<sup>10</sup>

Here it is helpful to connect Walton’s claims to philosophical discussions of the distinction between perception and cognition. Plausibly, if photographic and pictorial links constitute contact with objects but not *perceptual* contact with them, then they constitute *cognitive* contact with objects. To have such a photographic or pictorial link to an object, then, would not be to perceive that particular object, but to think of that particular object. (To put it in a different philosophical terminology, it would be to have *singular thought* about that object.)

So let us assume that ordinary visual links, photographic links, and pictorial links are all either perceptual contact with objects or cognitive contact with objects. To reach conclusions about which is which, we need a way of drawing the boundary between perception and cognition. To do this, we need to articulate a necessary condition on being a perceptual relation, whose non-satisfaction is also a necessary condition on being a cognitive relation. (Alternatively, we could articulate a necessary

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These two inquiries seem to me to be complementary, providing different ways of enhancing our understanding of how pictures present the world to us. It is worth noting, however, that while Yetter-Chappell argues that we can, in principle, see through photographs (as well as handmade pictures), she suggests that we typically do not do so, because ‘it’s not sufficient for seeing that one processes information tracking the world, leading to visual phenomenology. The information must be processed in such a way that we seem to be confronted with the (tracked objects in the) world’. Further: ‘there may be contingent features of our psychology that mean that we often don’t process information from photographs (etc.) in the way necessary to see through them’. (2018, sec. 5) Here, Yetter-Chappell seems to introduce her own necessary condition on seeing, which some, or perhaps most, cases of seeing things in photographs do not satisfy. It is not entirely clear what seeming to be confronted with an object amounts to, or (as Yetter-Chappell readily admits) what is involved in information being processed in such a way that this seeming is achieved. ‘Seeming to be confronted with’ an object may be similar to the notion of phenomenological perceptual presence, which I discuss in the next section.

<sup>10</sup>Of course, one could argue that no contact is provided by photographic or pictorial links. That would be to reject both (i) and (ii). I will discuss this option in the next section.

condition on being a *cognitive* relation, whose non-satisfaction is a necessary condition on being a perceptual relation.) The idea that there is such a boundary between perception and cognition is venerable, and various ways of marking it have been suggested. I will first consider a commonsense way of marking the boundary (section 4.1), then some alternative ways of marking it (section 4.2), and finally the possibility of marking it in new ways inspired by responses to Walton's slippery slope challenge (section 4.3).

#### 4.1. *Stimulus dependence*

One commonsense criterion that shows up in many attempts to delineate the perception-cognition border is stimulus dependence. Perception of objects seems to be dependent on, and sustained by, external sensory stimulus in a way that cognition of objects is not.<sup>11</sup> For instance, one's visual perception of a tree stops when one closes one's eyes or turns one's head, but one's thinking of that tree can continue through changes in sensory stimulus. According to the criterion of stimulus dependence, if one's relation to an object is either perceptual or cognitive, then if it is dependent on stimulus in this way, it is perceptual; otherwise, it is cognitive.

The relation between me and a particular tree when I look at a photograph (or painting) of it is dependent on the external sensory stimulus I receive. If the lights suddenly go out, or I turn my head, or close my eyes, I no longer have the same kind of relation to the tree. I may remember the tree and continue having whatever thoughts about it I was having while looking at the picture. But this would be true if I were initially looking at the tree through the window, as well.

In both cases there are two different kinds of relation. In keeping with the criterion of stimulus dependence, the difference between these relations might be characterised as a difference in freedom. One kind of relation enables attribution to the object that is constrained by the stimulus, while the other enables attribution that is not constrained by the stimulus. I can see the tree out my window only as bare and snow-covered, but I can think about it (even demonstratively via my current perception) being leafy and green. These two different degrees of attributive freedom are mirrored in the case of seeing the photograph. If the photograph shows the tree bare and snow-covered, this is how I will experience

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<sup>11</sup>Beck (2018) and Phillips (2017) focus on this criterion as a way of drawing the perception-cognition boundary, and point out its recurrence across various recent and historical accounts.

it as being in the photograph. But, as with ordinary perceptual demonstrative thought or memory-based thought, another kind of attribution is available that is not constrained by the stimulus. I can think of that very tree as green and leafy.

So it seems that to the same extent that we can distinguish ordinary visual links from stimulus independent links that are based on or derived from ordinary visual links, we can also distinguish photographic links from stimulus independent links that are based on or derived from them. Hence, the criterion of stimulus dependence does not set ordinary visual links, photographic links, and pictorial links on different sides of the perception-cognition boundary.

#### **4.2. Other criteria for marking the perception-cognition boundary**

Applying the criterion of stimulus dependence is not the only way of drawing the perception-cognition boundary. Arguably, however, most other traditional ways of drawing the boundary are plausible only if the field of mental states (or relations) that their preferred criterion is supposed to divide is limited to stimulus dependent states (or relations).<sup>12</sup> This might suggest that stimulus dependence is really the load-bearing criterion.

But in any case, most of these other criteria are also unlikely to place our three types of links on different sides of the perception-cognition border. For instance, photographic and pictorial links appear to be dependent not just on stimulus, but on *modally specific* stimulus, the light hitting the subject's retinas. Moreover, there is no special reason to think that either type of link is less *encapsulated*, i.e. more susceptible to influence by paradigmatically cognitive states like beliefs or desires than are ordinary visual links. Nor is there reason to think that the intentional state involved in a photographic or pictorial link, as opposed to that involved in an ordinary visual link, would have to have *conceptual, propositional, or digital contents*.

Perhaps the most promising alternative traditional criterion is *phenomenological perceptual presence*. It seems that a stark difference between perceiving an object and thinking about it is the way in which the object seems to be 'present' or 'there' when one perceives it but not when one merely thinks about it. Although the words 'present' and 'there' can also be used to describe the feeling of contact with objects pointed out by Walton, phenomenological perceptual presence is typically

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<sup>12</sup>See Phillips (2017) for a survey of traditional boundary-drawing methods and the argument that they rely on limiting their field to stimulus dependent states to be viable.

described in ways that distinguish it from contact. Crane and French, for instance, analyze it in terms of *immediate responsiveness*:

*Presence*: the character of perceptual experience itself involves the presentation (as) of ordinary objects in such a way that it is immediately responsive to the character of its presented objects. (2017, sec. 1.1.2)

This could mean that an experience displays presence if and only if its character is in fact immediately responsive to the character of the presented objects. Alternatively, it could mean that an experience displays presence if and only if it is part of its character to *seem* to be immediately responsive to the character of the presented objects. Since presence is supposed to be a phenomenological feature – a way that perceptual experiences of objects seem – the second interpretation might be preferable. Apparent immediate responsiveness of the experience’s character to the way the object is would then be the criterion for separating perceptions of objects from cognitions of them.

This criterion would seem to put photographic and pictorial links on the cognitive side of the border. When I look at a photograph or painting of a tree, my experience does not seem to be immediately responsive to how the tree is. But the criterion also appears to place on the cognitive side some relations which, assuming they are either cognitive or perceptual, seem to be clearly perceptual.

Suppose that, while giving a speech, I try to visualise my mother in the audience. Unbeknownst to me, she is actually there. I see her but take myself to be only visualising her.<sup>13</sup> Presumably, if I have not been too swept away by my attempts at visualisation, my experience does not have the character of seeming to be immediately responsive to my mother’s features, any more than it would if she were not there and I were merely visualising her as a face in the crowd. But this experience is an experience of seeing my mother, even if I do not take it to be such. (It may be that I am also visualising her, i.e. standing in a cognitive relation to her. Still, one relation I stand in to her is perceptual rather than cognitive, even though it involves no phenomenology of immediate responsiveness.)

A criterion based on the other interpretation of phenomenological presence would not have this problem. Such a criterion would be: assuming a relation to an object is either perceptual or cognitive, then it is perceptual

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<sup>13</sup>The scenario is similar to the famous Perky experiment (Perky 1910), although here the visualisation is of a particular object, my mother, as opposed to being of a non-specific object of a given kind.

if and only if it involves phenomenal character that *is* immediately responsive to the features of the object; otherwise it is cognitive. My perception of my mother may not have immediate responsiveness as part of its phenomenological character, but it is plausible that its phenomenological character is, in fact, immediately responsive to my mother's features. However, here the problem arises of how to understand 'immediately'. The character of our visual experiences is responsive to the features of the objects we see only with a time delay. In the case of distant objects, like stars, this can even lead to situations in which the character of our present visual experience is responsive to how the objects we are seeing were tens or hundreds of thousands of years ago. Any standards for immediateness we could come up with seem bound to be arbitrary.

Given this, it might pay to do away with immediateness and focus only on responsiveness. A revised criterion would be: assuming a relation to an object is perceptual rather than cognitive, the character of the relevant phenomenal experience is responsive to how the object is. Perhaps not immediately, but eventually. By contrast, if one's relation to the object is cognitive rather than perceptual, then the character of the relevant phenomenal experience is not responsive to how the object is.

Once again, this seems to put photographic and pictorial links on the cognitive side. However long I look at a photograph or a painting, the character of my visual experience is not going to change in response to changes in features of the objects in the picture. Or so it might seem. But actually, it can happen that the character of one's visual experience in looking at a picture *does* change in response to changes in the object at the time the photograph was taken, or the painting painted. For instance, looking at a long-exposure photograph of a sprinter might give me a visual experience that unfolds over time as I follow the sprinter's movements with my eyes, so the character of my experience is responsive to the features of the sprinter over the time that the photograph was taken. But when that experience ends, it is no longer responsive to the sprinter's features. Even more clearly, the character of one's visual experience in watching movies and other video images is responsive to how the objects in the videos were during the period captured on video, but remains so only for the duration of the video. Handmade pictures and animation videos could exhibit a similar responsiveness. So in order to keep photographic and pictorial links on the cognitive side, the criterion has to be: assuming a relation to an object is perceptual rather than cognitive, the character of the relevant phenomenal experience is *indefinitely* responsive to how the object is.

By this criterion, if one had access to indefinitely continuing videos of an object, or a series of indefinitely updated photographs or paintings of it, one's link to the object would be perceptual rather than cognitive. Seeing a given sequence of photographs (anything from a single photograph to years and years worth of them) in such a situation would thus count as perceiving the objects in the photographs. But seeing the very same sequence of photographs in a situation where they were not going to continue indefinitely would not. This seems an odd result. Indefinite responsiveness of the character of one's phenomenal experience to changes in the features of an object looks like an arbitrary criterion for dividing perceptual from cognitive links.

In sum, although a phenomenological perceptual presence criterion for the perception-cognition boundary at first seems promising for placing the three types of link on different sides of that boundary, it is not clear how to spell it out so as to get paradigm cases right and avoid arbitrariness.

#### **4.3. Criteria drawn from the Walton debate**

Before leaving the perception-cognition boundary, it is worth considering how some previous efforts to answer Walton's slippery slope challenge (see section 3) might be adapted to the present methodology. The debate over Walton's claims has produced a number of proposals for necessary conditions on seeing an object that are claimed not to be satisfied by photographic links to objects. For instance:

- (a) A subject sees an object only if there is no delay unexplained by the speed of light between the state of the object and the subject's awareness of that state (Warburton 1988, 73).
- (b) A subject sees an object only if changes in the object are matched by changes in the subject's experience (Warburton 1988, 73).
- (c) A subject sees an object only if her link to the object provides her with (or merely carries<sup>14</sup>) *egocentric spatial information* – information about the spatial relationship between her and the object (Warburton 1988, 71–72; Currie 1991, 26; Carroll 1996, 62–63; Cohen and Meskin 2004, 201).

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<sup>14</sup>Cohen and Meskin (2004) argue that a perceptual process need not provide a subject with egocentric spatial information in the sense of giving her knowledge or beliefs about her location relative to the object; rather, it must simply carry information about that relative location in the sense of there being an objective probabilistic link between the perceptual process and that relative location. (201)

- (d) A subject sees an object only if there is at least one way for her to move such that if she were to move this way, her view of the object would change continuously as she moved (Nanay 2010).
- (e) A subject sees an object only if her link to it is unmediated by any intentional link to a different object. (That is, only if her awareness of it is not *in virtue of* her seeing, perceiving, or cognising some other object.) (Friday 1996)

These proposed necessary conditions on seeing an object seem to be regarded by their proponents as also being necessary conditions on *perceiving* an object, more generally. Thus it may be asked whether they can serve as criteria for the boundary between perceptual and cognitive links to objects. Considering them on their own, the answer would seem to be no. Recall that in order to serve as boundary criteria, not only must a condition be necessary for a link to be perceptual, its non-satisfaction must also be necessary for a link to be cognitive. (Otherwise, a link that satisfies the condition might be either perceptual or cognitive.) But this does not seem to be the case for the above conditions. First, if cognitive links to objects often piggyback on perceptual links, such that I might think about the tomato in front of me – e.g. that it is red – because I see it being red, then such cognitive links may well include no special time delay between the state of the object and my thoughts about it. Further, my thoughts about the object may be sensitive to changes in the object. So the first two proposed necessary conditions on seeing an object need not be unsatisfied by thinking about an object. This means they cannot serve as criteria dividing perceptual from cognitive links.

Neither will the requirement of carrying egocentric spatial information serve as a boundary. As Currie points out, ‘there are all sorts of inferential paths to egocentric information which do not count as perceptual paths’ (1991, 29, note 27). If I am starting to give a lecture in room A, I may infer from this and various other knowledge about lecture schedules and the room assignment process that right now another lecturer is preparing to give a lecture in room B, about 40 metres north of room A. This thinking process yields egocentric spatial information about that lecturer, but any link it provides to that lecturer seems cognitive rather than perceptual. So the carrying of egocentric information about an object does not divide perceptual links from cognitive ones.

Nanay’s condition (d) would serve as a divider between perceptual and cognitive links only if (for instance) our links to objects we see portrayed in sculpture, which satisfy the condition, sit on the perceptual side of the

boundary, while our links to objects we see in photographs sit on the cognitive side. This seems arbitrary. Accordingly, Nanay clearly states that ‘there are many perceptual episodes that satisfy this necessary condition and that we may nonetheless not want to take to be instances of genuine perception’ (475). So (d) does not look plausible as a dividing criterion, either.

Finally, it seems possible to have a cognitive link to an object where that link is not mediated by an intentional link to some other object. For instance, I might think about my mother without doing this *by* seeing a photograph of her, or *by* thinking of a necklace she gave me. I might just think of her. Hence, it does not seem necessary for a link to be cognitive that it be mediated in this way, and (e) is not plausible as a divider between perception and cognition.

At the beginning of the previous sub-section, I mentioned the strategy of coupling a stimulus dependence criterion with another criterion in order to draw the perception-cognition boundary. Some of the conditions listed above lend themselves to this strategy. While many relations to objects that seem to fall on the cognitive side of the boundary satisfy conditions (a) and (b), it is harder to find such relations satisfying both (a) and the requirement of stimulus dependence, or both (b) and the requirement of stimulus dependence. (E.g. My thinking about the tomato’s state may have no special time delay, and it may track changes in the tomato, but it is not dependent on the stimulus, as I could continue to think about the tomato with my eyes closed, head turned in a different direction, and so on.) Similarly, while some egocentric spatial information-carrying links seem at home on the cognitive side of the perception-cognition border, it is harder to come up with examples of stimulus dependent egocentric information-carrying links that do. And while some unmediated intentional links seem at home on the cognitive side, it is harder to find stimulus dependent unmediated links that do.<sup>15</sup>

This strategy offers novel ways of furthering two different investigations. First, in the present effort to determine whether ordinary visual links, photographic links, and pictorial links are the same or different in kind, it frames the search for necessary conditions on seeing in a new way. In the debate over Walton’s claims, the usual approach is to propose a necessary condition on seeing an object and then assess whether it really is necessary, full stop. By contrast, this approach assesses

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<sup>15</sup>Nanay’s condition (d) is not helped by coupling with stimulus dependence, since seeing things through sculptures is also stimulus dependent.

whether a given condition *and* stimulus dependence are jointly necessary for a relation to be perceptual *and* whether the non-satisfaction of either that condition or stimulus dependence is necessary for a relation to be cognitive. To be sure, asking what is required for a link to be on the perceptual rather than the cognitive side of the perception-cognition boundary still relies on eliciting intuitions based on our concept of perception. But these intuitions are elicited in a more targeted manner: we ask whether a given subject-object link is intuitively perceptual or cognitive, given it is one or the other, rather than simply whether it is perceptual. The provision of a contrast class adds context and focus to the inquiry.

Second, discussion of the perception-cognition boundary might be enriched by assessing boundary criteria that can be derived from the necessary conditions on seeing proposed by Walton's critics. Doing so would extend attention to the difference between perceptual and cognitive subject-object links, whereas current focus is mostly on the difference between perceptual and cognitive states of the subject. And it could yield new candidate border criteria, such as those I have enumerated.

The proposal under consideration is, first, that one or more of the combinations of stimulus dependence with (a), (b), (c), or (e) yields a plausible dividing criterion between perception and cognition. The second part of the proposal is that this criterion (or these criteria) places photographic and pictorial links on the cognitive side of the border. One way to resist the proposal is to find stimulus dependent subject-object links that *satisfy* conditions (a), (b), (c) and (e), but nonetheless are more plausibly on the cognitive, rather than the perceptual, side of the perception-cognition border. Doing so would undermine the plausibility of the proposed borderlines. This in turn would weaken the reason for thinking that the failure of photographic and pictorial links to satisfy these conditions makes those links an importantly different kind of contact from ordinary visual links.

Arguments from the Walton debate aimed at showing that (a), (b), (c) or (e) are not necessary conditions on seeing (perceiving) may be pulled into service here. Friday (1996, 33) imagines a subject with prosthetic eyes that enable programmed delays in the transmission of images on the prosthetic retinae to the subject's photoreceptors. He invites us to share the intuition that the subject nonetheless sees the objects from which light was reflected onto her prosthetic retinae.<sup>16</sup> In the present context, we can strengthen this intuition by noting that if the subject's relation to those

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<sup>16</sup>Yetter-Chappell (2018) makes similar points about time delays.

objects is either a perceptual or a cognitive one, it is hard to see grounds for classing it as cognitive. Additionally, Friday points out that while seeing temporally extended events may require changes in objects to be matched by changes in one's experience, just seeing the objects themselves does not. Yetter-Chappell (2018) illustrates this with the examples of seeing objects in a strobe-lit room, or in a momentary illumination of an otherwise dark room. Again, the point is strengthened when the alternatives are to class these subject-object relations either as perceiving the objects or as cognising them.

Nanay (2010, 467) suggests that (c) might be rejected on the grounds that a single point of light in a dark room always seems a uniform distance in front of our eyes (so the link carries no egocentric spatial information), yet, intuitively we see the light. Yetter-Chappell argues against (c) on the grounds that if one had external prosthetic eyes that could be moved far away from one's body such that one could not track their location, this process would carry no egocentric spatial information about the objects reflecting light into the eyes, yet, intuitively, one would see those objects. Both points are strengthened when the question is whether the relations to the point of light or to the objects seen with the remote eyes are *cognitive as opposed to perceptual*. Even if some might hesitate to categorise them as perceptual, full stop, they are clearly more perceptual than cognitive.

Finally, the perception-cognition boundary suggested by (e), of stimulus-dependence plus non-mediation, is difficult to assess because of the unclarity in the notion of mediation. It is plausible, for instance, that one sees ordinary physical objects by seeing their facing surfaces. Does this imply that ordinary visual links to objects are mediated by intentional relations to their facing surfaces? A proponent of the boundary line under consideration should resist this implication, since it would place ordinary visual links on the cognitive side of the perception-cognition boundary. The difficulty is in spelling out what mediation by intentional relations amounts to such that it does not include intentional relations to facing surfaces but does include (for instance) intentional relations to photographs. To attempt this is to enter into one of philosophy of perception's most difficult discussions (broadly, about the difference between 'direct' and 'indirect' theories of perception).<sup>17</sup> I will simply note that within this discussion it remains an open question whether perception can be mediated, and hence whether the combination of (e) and

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<sup>17</sup>See Campbell (2004) and Fish (2004) for helpful discussion.

stimulus-dependence would be a viable dividing line between perception and cognition.

There is not space here to develop in detail any of these suggestions for placing our three types of link on opposite sides of the perception-cognition boundary. Preliminarily speaking, it seems that objections to (a)-(e) are made stronger if refocused into objections to the correlated ways of drawing the perception-cognition boundary. This is further support for the view that the perception-cognition boundary will not separate ordinary visual, photographic, and pictorial links into importantly different kinds of contact.

### 5. Contact versus no contact

A different possibility for separating photographic or pictorial links from ordinary visual links is to argue that the latter constitute contact with objects, while the former two do not. This would be to reject both claims (i) and (ii) set out in section 3.

One way in which photographic and pictorial links might fail to constitute contact is by failing to be mental, or intentional, relations to objects at all – i.e. by failing to be relations whereby objects are in, on, or before subjects' minds. If this is the case, then the objects to which subjects bear photographic and pictorial links have played causal roles in producing certain kinds of experience for the subjects, but the resulting relations are *merely causal*. They are akin to the kind of relation I stand in to your great-grandmother when I see you; or the kind of relation I stand in to a tree before me when an image of it is reflected onto my retina, although my optic nerve is cut; or the kind of relation I stand in to the long-ago dark-room technician who developed the photograph of a tree that I now look at. Intuitively, none of these causal connections with direction from the objects to me and carrying various kinds of information about the objects puts the respective objects in mind. But, also intuitively, photographic and pictorial links are *not* like this: they are different precisely in that they *do* seem to bring objects to mind. It seems that even if one has never seen a given person (or tree, or other object) before, seeing a picture of that person can bring her to mind, just as much as seeing her across the subway platform.

The final word on whether photographic and pictorial links do or do not bring objects to mind might have to await a correct theory of intentionality. (Something that is outside the scope of this paper.) But the default position should be that photographic and pictorial links are mental or

intentional, rather than *merely* causal. Any view that treats these links as merely causal owes some explanation of why they seem so sharply different from other merely causal, non-mental/intentional links.

Following Russell (1905, 1910/11), one might hold that genuine intentional relations to objects cannot be relations of *internal condition satisfaction* – they cannot hold in virtue of an object uniquely satisfying conditions that the subject invokes in her thinking. An example of a relation of internal condition satisfaction is the relation I stand in to the person who is in fact the oldest currently living human being, when I consider that of all the currently living human beings on Earth, one is the oldest. Russell maintained that I cannot actually think of *that particular person* in this way, but only the attributes of being old, being a human being, and so on.

If one agrees with Russell, one might argue that photographic and pictorial links are not intentional by arguing that they are relations of internal condition satisfaction. (Hereafter, I will simply call such relations ‘satisfactional’.) This strategy, as already observed, would need an explanation of why photographic and pictorial links nonetheless seem to be mental or intentional links to objects.

But in fact, there is reason to think that satisfactional relations to objects cannot be relations of contact, even if they *are* intentional. My earlier analysis suggested that the kind of relation one feels oneself to be in to objects when one feels in contact with them is a causal relation with direction from the objects to a certain state of one’s mind. But satisfactional relations to objects are not causal relations with direction from the objects to states of one’s mind. Rather, they are better described as logical relations between a state of one’s mind and an object. When I consider that of all the currently living human beings on Earth, one is the oldest, this state of my mind has a logical relation to a certain individual (i.e. the one that uniquely satisfies this condition), but there is no causal relation with direction from that individual to this state of my mind. My only relation to this individual that is even potentially mental (or intentional) is satisfactional. By virtue of being satisfactional, this relation is not a relation of contact. In general, a relation between a subject and an object is not contact if it depends solely on the object’s satisfying a condition internal to the subject’s mentation.

Given this, and given that photographic links and pictorial links are (until proven otherwise) intentional relations, a promising way to argue that they are not relations of contact would be to argue that putative intentional relations between subjects and the objects they see in pictures

depend solely on those objects uniquely satisfying conditions internal to the subjects' mental lives. This would imply that although there may be object-to-subject, informational causal links in such cases, *these* links are merely causal and do not constitute contact in Walton's sense. Rather, any intentional link to objects seen in pictures is satisfactorial.

One way to argue this would be to claim that our photographic and pictorial links to objects obtain because those objects are uniquely picked out by our qualitative experiences in looking at the pictures. For example, when I look at the photograph of the tree, my qualitative visual experience uniquely matches a particular tree, and in virtue of this I have an intentional link to that tree. This view is not plausible, as it is evident that the object that best matches a 'qualitative look' generated by a picture – however this may be understood – may not be the object that is seen in the picture.

A subtler version of this kind of view might be an extension of Searle's (1983) view that in ordinary vision, what makes one's visual experience be *of* a particular object (i.e. what puts the subject in an intentional relation to that particular object) is that the object uniquely satisfies a condition along the lines of *being the object (of such-and-such a type) causing this experience*. In Searle's view, it is part of the content of the experience that the experience is of the thing(s) that cause(s) it; hence the condition is internal to the subject's mental life.<sup>18</sup> Presumably, such a condition might also pick out an object seen in a picture. For example, it might be part of the content of my visual experience of the tree photograph that a unique tree is part of its cause, and the tree that satisfies this condition would be the one shown in the photograph. If this were the right view, then photographic and pictorial links would not be relations of contact, but relations of internal condition satisfaction. But it seems that if this were the right view of photographic and pictorial links, then it would also be the right view of ordinary visual links. For suppose Searle is wrong, and ordinary visual links are relations of contact. This seems to remove any grounds for thinking that a Searlian account is right about photographic and pictorial links. The approach under consideration rejects *contact*, in particular, as the kind unifying the three types of link, but it offers a different unifying kind – internal condition satisfaction – and does not in itself hold out much promise for disunification. Given this, I will simply leave it as an alternative

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<sup>18</sup>Though Searle insists that this does not entail that subjects need in any way to articulate the condition to themselves using the concepts cause or experience. (Searle 1991, 228–229)

potential path to bringing the three types of links under a single natural kind.<sup>19</sup>

A different approach would be to argue that the dependence on internal condition satisfaction exhibited by photographic and pictorial links sets them apart from ordinary visual links. Here one might develop an intuition of Kent Bach's (2007, 2010) that when one sees a footprint, one is aware of, and enabled to think of, only the footprint. One's mind may reach the individual who left the footprint only by invoking a condition such as *being the creature who left this footprint*, of which that individual is the unique satisfier. If it is right that any putative intentional relation to the leaver of the footprint would depend on such internal condition satisfaction, then perhaps putative intentional relations to objects seen in photographs or handmade pictures are similarly dependent.<sup>20</sup>

One might resist the claim that the only way to mentally reach a creature via its footprint is by invoking a condition involving the footprint that the creature satisfies uniquely. I am drawn to such resistance, but since my focus is on pictures rather than footprints, I will not pursue it here. It is worth asking, though, *why* internal condition satisfaction might seem essential for having the footprint-leaver in mind, but not for having the footprint itself in mind. Bach suggests that it is because the footprint-leaver, in contrast to the footprint, 'does not seem to be perceptually present'. (2010, 42) His thought seems to be that since the footprint-leaver is not perceptually present – not simply *there* in the visual experience – something else is needed to connect the subject mentally to that individual.

It is not clear how well this rationale carries over to pictures. For one thing, there is the issue discussed above (section 4.2) of how the notion of phenomenological perceptual presence is to be understood. Here what is important seems to be not the immediacy or responsiveness of the perceptual experience to the object, but the mental availability of the object from the experience alone. In this respect, objects are often just as available via pictures as they are in direct seeing. When I look at either my photograph or my painting of a tree, the tree is right there to be seen. It is not visually absent in the way that (arguably) the creature who leaves a footprint is absent from one's visual perception of the

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<sup>19</sup>Along with many others, I find Searle's satisfactoral view of ordinary visual links implausible, but discussion of the problems is outside the scope of this paper. (For some criticism see Lepore and van Gulick 1991, especially the contributions in parts III-V.)

<sup>20</sup>Bach himself seems to think so, adding to his claim that footprint-leavers may be mentally accessed only by internal condition satisfaction: 'Similarly, if we saw things only in photographs and films, our cognitive access to them would be equally indirect'. (2007, 65)

footprint.<sup>21</sup> This weakens the case that internal condition satisfaction is required for photographic or pictorial links by undercutting the motivation for that requirement – namely, that the objects are not otherwise mentally available to a subject in looking at pictures of them.

A different way to weaken the case is to argue that subjects may have photographic or pictorial links to objects even when they clearly do not deploy internal conditions that are uniquely satisfied by those objects.<sup>22</sup> Very young humans, dogs, and no doubt a range of other photographically ignorant subjects can see things in photographs – i.e. have photographic links to objects. They are not able to supply descriptions like ‘the tree that reflected light through the lens of a camera resulting in production of this photograph’, nor do they have the basic knowledge of photography or even the conceptual apparatus to invoke such conditions in their thinking.

It might be replied that nothing so explicit or conceptualised is required for these photographic links to be forged by the satisfaction of internal conditions. Perhaps all that is required is that the subjects, if presented with a complete description of their actual situation (in a format accessible to them), are disposed to identify a piece of that description as describing what they have in mind, and that piece of the description is satisfied by a particular object.<sup>23</sup> But this does not help much. Even if one could provide a dog or a small child with an accessible complete description of their actual situation, and suitably motivate them to locate within it the object they see in a photograph, it is hard to see how they could carry out the task. Not understanding anything about photography, they would make no connections between some long ago reflection of light through a lens, development processes, framings, wall-hangings, and their present experience. Yet they seem to have photographic links to objects just as much as better informed subjects do. The same line of argument would apply to pictorial links.

Hence, it is neither clear what motivation there is for thinking that internal condition satisfaction is needed for objects to be mentally

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<sup>21</sup>One might argue that at least the foot of the creature is quite visually present when one sees the footprint. This is probably why Walton (1984, 275, note 13) takes seeing footprints to be a way of being in contact with feet. Even accepting this, one might maintain, as Bach does, that to get the whole creature in mind requires internal condition satisfaction. Against this, it could be maintained that having a creature’s foot in mind is a way of having the creature in mind.

<sup>22</sup>This mirrors the well-known strategy employed by Kripke, Donnellan, and others in arguing that speakers’ uses of proper names do not refer to objects by virtue of those objects satisfying descriptions the speakers associate with the names. (See, for example, Kripke 1980 and Donnellan 1970.)

<sup>23</sup>This has been a prominent form of response to the Kripke/Donnellan arguments. See, for example, Jackson (1998).

available via pictures, nor is it clear that internal condition satisfaction is in fact present in many cases of intentional links via pictures. Further, suppose it is correct that a very young child can have a photographic (or pictorial) link to a particular tree via the photograph (painting) on my wall, where this link is not constituted by the tree satisfying some condition contained in her psychology. Then there seems to be no reason to hold that my photographic (pictorial) link to that tree *is* constituted in this way. I assume that young children have no special means of seeing objects in pictures that adults lack. So I, an adult perceiver, must at least have the same kind of link to the tree as the child has. My additional abilities to describe my relation to the tree or identify it in a complete description under ideal cognitive circumstances are just that – additional to the obtaining of the relation itself.<sup>24</sup>

If it is not plausible that photographic and pictorial links obtain in virtue of the satisfaction of internal conditions, then it cannot be argued on that basis that such links are not relations of contact. There may be other bases on which to argue this, even if it is accepted that photographic and pictorial links are intentional relations. For instance, one might deny that intentional relations divide exhaustively into satisfactoral relations and contact relations.<sup>25</sup> One might then argue that photographic and pictorial links fall into a third category of intentional relation that is neither satisfactoral nor a relation of contact. I will not attempt to construct such an argument here, but flag it as a possible avenue for driving a wedge between ordinary visual links, on the one hand, and photographic and pictorial links, on the other.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper I have explored and developed Walton's suggestion that the special phenomenological experience of looking at photographs reveals an important natural kind of subject-object relation, *contact*. According to Walton, contact unites ordinary visual links and photographic links. I offered a preliminary characterisation of contact and argued (in section 5) that there is reason to think that Walton is correct that both ordinary

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<sup>24</sup>See Derosset (2011) for a similar line of reasoning regarding children's use of proper names.

<sup>25</sup>Dickie (2016) argues, in effect, that no intentional relations to objects (among those produced by conceptual thought) are contact relations or satisfactoral relations. Rather, they are relations of justificational structure. There is not space here to elaborate and critique the details of Dickie's account, but if it is right it would imply that no cognitive relations (i.e., relations of conceptual thinking-about) are contact relations. This would not immediately imply that photographic and pictorial links are not contact relations, since they might be perceptual contact relations.

visual links and photographic links are members of it. On the other hand, I rejected (in section 3) Walton's claim that pictorial links are not members of the contact kind, on the grounds that handmade pictures do not differ from photographs in ways that are relevant to being in contact with something. I also explored (in section 4) Walton's claim that ordinary visual links and photographic links do not belong to two different sub-kinds of contact by suggesting that the most likely candidates for such sub-kinds are *perceptual contact* and *cognitive contact*. This connects Walton's discussion to the question of how to draw the boundary between perception and cognition. By reflection on different candidate answers to that question, I argued that it looks difficult to place photographic and pictorial links on the cognitive side of this border while keeping ordinary visual links on the perceptual side.

My conclusions so far are preliminary, recommending unification under the kind *contact*, rather than division into separate natural kinds, of ordinary visual links, photographic links, and pictorial links. As I have tried to indicate at relevant points in the course of my discussion, many avenues remain open for further investigation and potential rejection of this claim to unification. In spite of – and, in part, because of – these loose ends, I hope to have provided a new roadmap for categorising and characterising the kinds of relations we bear to objects that reach us through various pictorial (and, as a potential extension, linguistic) media. In contrast to the approaches of many of Walton's respondents, this roadmap takes up and develops Walton's suggestion that reflection on our pictorial apprehension of the world should shift focus away from analysis of our ordinary notions of *seeing* and *perceiving*. Instead, it should push us to recognise a broader natural kind such as *contact* that better categorises and characterises our mental relations to objects in the world. The present paper has been an initial effort at explaining how to do this.

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