

Cats!

gs partially behind other things

Maria is sitting in front of a suitcase, a cat is perfectly still behind it and its head is peeping out. The suitcase and the cat's head are front lit, Maria's eyes are wide open and she has good sight.

Although the front surface of the cat's head and the front surface of the suitcase are visible only, Maria has the visual experience of a cat behind a suitcase. Since everything in the world is as it should be, she sees the cat and the suitcase. Is she having in mind the portion of the cat that is behind the suitcase in any interesting sense of "having in mind"? Is she having in mind the back surface of the suitcase? Is she having expectations of some kind about the unseen parts?

Maria is sitting in front of a broom, a cat is sleeping behind it and things are front lit. It doesn't look to Maria as if there are pieces of a cat at the two sides of the broom. Rather, Maria has the visual experience of a cat behind a broom. Again, she is seeing both the cat and the broom. Is she having in mind that slim portion of the cat that lies behind the broom in any interesting sense of "having in mind"? Is she having expectations of some kind about the unseen parts?

These examples raise the puzzle of occlusion. This puzzle concerns the very familiar fact that most of the objects around us that we see are partially hidden from our view by other objects. If they are 3-D objects, their back side, too, is hidden by their front side. Even if they are so obscured, we do not see collections of parts and bits of their surfaces, but rather *whole* objects partially hidden from view by other objects and by some of their own parts. The enigma gives rise to two different although related questions. One is *how* we see occlusions, that is, what is the mechanism that makes us having the visual experience of a whole object that is obscured from view by its front surface or by another object. The other is *what kind* of experience is that. As my description of the examples suggests, I am interested in the "what kind" question and I will address it with respect to simple

ve conceptual recognition. I will defend the following
possible counterexamples:

(SUFFI) For any x and any y , if x sees a non-detached part of y , then x sees y .

Kanizsa, Michotte, Husserl and Noe hold that seeing things partially behind other things necessarily involves awareness of the unseen parts even in the case of simple seeing. I will provide counterexamples against their thesis. As I see the matter, for simple seeing (SUFFI) *sufficit*.

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E. Husserl, *Ding und Raum*