Perception holds the key to the riddle of man's entanglement with the world. It is the human experience by virtue of which humans incorporate into their existence the fundamentally opposing bents of being. To the knower, these tendencies appear as perspectives from which it is possible to observe the world. In the world, these tendencies assume the forms of showing or hiding, visibility or invisibility, presence or compresence. Whatever the form the opposing of reality takes, it belongs in the same manner to knower and known. So that if there are perspectival elements to perception, the perspectives are worldly-subjective in origin. Perspectivity is not the result of a flaw in the perceptual powers of subjects. The goal of knowledge, therefore, cannot be spelled out in terms of achieving objectivity, or in terms of overriding the perspectivity.

The unfortunate relegation of the perspectives to the cogito vitiates the significance of perception and fails to point to the proper source of human knowledge, mainly human interaction with the world. There are perspectives because the world is fragmentary. There are perspectives because knowers are in the world. Something about the meeting of knower and known in perception brings about this insight.

To say that the world is fragmentary is to say that the world is both present and compresent, visible and invisible. It would be erroneous to assume that because perception captures the fragmentary character of the world, perception causes that character to be partial. It would also be inappropriate to suppose that because the being of the world and the perception of the world coincide, perception grasps an in itself in its activity. Perception always distances knower and known in the same moment that it brings them into relationship with each other. A person is merged with the world in sameness, not when that person turns to look at the world, but when the person ceases to look. When a perceiver acts, the world becomes the visible to an invisible subject. When perception
rests, both subject and object merge in their invisibility. The only way to grasp the in-itselfness of the world is to be the world. That experience belongs only to the dreams and fantasies of human drunkenness in the desire to know, not to the actuality of knowing.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty thematizes the interaction of knower and known in perception in terms of the visible-invisible constitution of flesh. Ortega expresses the perceptual confrontation of subjects and objects in terms of the present-compresent constituting fundamental being. Separately, these insights give shape to a philosophical puzzle in the work of each of these thinkers. In combination the insights give instead a fascinating view of the perceptual experience in its world.

Consider the terms in combination. The visible is the present, the invisible the compresent. In perception, the world is visible-invisible to a compresent-present; this means that in perception the subject is present to the world, compresent to himself, and the world is partially present and partially compresent before the experiencer. I would venture to suggest at this point that if the subject were absolutely present to the world and to himself at the same time, then, the world also would be present as a whole. That thought, we relegate to the dream of gods.

Yet, there is absoluteness in the very movement from visible to invisible which knowers and known effectuate. The same absoluteness of a body life which Merleau-Ponty appropriately names la chair.

There is no doubt that in what concerns the mind and truth they rest on the primary stratum of the sensible world, and that our assurance of being in truth is one with our assurance of being in the world.¹

The knower and the known belong within one world which renders their opposition cohesive, by itself being a world of a visible-invisible structure. The body of the world, its flesh, is an enmeshing of visibility and invisibility brought out to meaning in the perceptual dialogue between consciousness and things. This dialogue forms the flesh, the absoluteness of body-life. This dialogue brings forth meaning.

In as much as the visible is supported by an inner framework of significance hidden from the visibility which it makes present, the known is irrevocably bound to meaning. That significance is so much part of a phenomenon that it leads the knower to claims of having seen it. When Aristotle, for instance, proposes the categories, he is not establishing ideal constructs. The categories are