This is my second philosophical dissertation. The first is my Italian *tesi di dottorato* entitled *Teoria del Significato e Filosofia della Logica*, completed in 1992 and now published by the publishing house CLUEB of Bologna. In that book, which deals also with the truth-conditional and verificationist conceptions of meaning, the reader can find a different presentation of the argumental conception of meaning developed here. After the Italian dissertation, however, I soon felt unsatisfied with my first treatment of the argumental conception. I thought that various aspects of it could be significantly improved, and in general I deemed it necessary to articulate my view in more detail. So I conceived the plan of writing my Swedish dissertation entirely about the argumental conception. Gradually, further reflection upon the subject, also prompted by many stimulating discussions during the Thursday seminars at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Stockholm, persuaded me that other substantial revisions of my previous theses were necessary.

Here, I cannot make a list of all the differences between the two versions of the argumental conception respectively presented in the two books: I shall mention only the most important novelties. I owe the most visible and pervasive difference – which I consider an important progress – to my supervisor, Professor Dag Prawitz, whose advice was decisive also in many other respects. During a discussion concerning the evidence for an argumental theory of meaning he made a remark through which I understood that my original choice of the fundamental notions in terms of which the various relevant meaning-theoretical concepts are defined in my previous work was not the best choice. He suggested that my view could be spelled out in another much more natural way, by adopting as a basic notion the relation of "presupposition" between words (which in the previous version was a defined notion). I followed his suggestion. To my disappointment, this involved a lot of work, which I carried out in the summer of 1993. The result is that now, if the definitions of key concepts like ‘representation of a meaningful language’, ‘rule concerning a word’, ‘rule concerning a sentence’, ‘immediate argumental role of a sentence’ and of many other subsidiary concepts in this book are compared with their counterparts in the Italian dissertation, one will find them significantly different. Moreover, restructuring the argumental theory led me to a new approach to the problem concerning the nature of the data which are to count as evidence for (or against) an argumental theory of meaning for a particular language.

Another novelty in this book has to do with the relation between the argumental theory of sense and the philosophical analysis of the notion of truth.
At first, my being in sympathy with the epistemic conception of truth prevented me from realizing that the theory of sense centred upon immediate argumental role is compatible also with different conceptions of truth and that, therefore, in order to argue for the epistemic conception of truth, one has to add considerations which go beyond the argumental theory of sense.

I presented the argumental conception of meaning in the course of some seminars at the University of Stockholm and thanks to the reactions of the participants I could understand that other aspects of my view had to be developed or modified. In particular, Dr Peter Pagin called my attention to the issue of the similarities and differences between the argumental conception of meaning and conceptual role semantics. Professor Per Martin Lőf very helpfully opposed my view on the meaningfulness of paradoxical languages. Moreover, Per Martin Lőf, Peter Pagin and Dag Prawitz persuaded me to modify my treatment of synonymy. Dr Fredrik Stjernberg stimulated my reflection on the publicness of meaning. I thank them all, not only for their valuable criticisms and suggestions during seminars or private conversations, but also for the kindness and friendship which they showed during my stays in Stockholm.

So many Italian friends provided encouragement, support and assistance of various kinds at different stages during the writing of this book that I cannot mention all their names. But I must at least acknowledge my debt to Carlo Cellucci for his teaching, and to Gino Roncaglia and Mario De Caro for their tireless willingness to discuss almost every topic with me. Mario, in particular, went through the whole manuscript and brought about a large number of refinements.

But my greatest debt is to Dag Prawitz; without his teaching, interest, and support, this book would have never been written.