Merleau-Ponty's works from 1949-1953 mark an important, perhaps determinative phase in his philosophical development. These works give us a more precise understanding of his views on the relation between thought and language, and by uncovering the problem of truth in a new way they embody the reasons why his philosophy moved to its later ontological point of view. If the plan of *Phenomenology of Perception* had served as an indication, we might have expected his succeeding works to have dealt largely with the topics of freedom or temporality, but of course this is not the case. It appears that his writings during the late 1940's and early 1950's were directed more towards the problems surrounding language and speech. The operative concept (used, but never fully defined) at this point in his development was that of meaning *(sens)*.

The present paper deals with the problem of the relation between language and thought in the works of this period for two reasons: first, because the epistemological question of the relation between language and thought is itself an important topic with significant implications for the way we are ultimately to conceive of the act of thinking; and second because through a sustained reflection on these works we can obtain a key to Merleau-Ponty's philosophical intentions during this formative, transitional time. We can come to see how the procession from percep-
tion to language to thought, and how the concept of meaning were leading him to his goal of discovering the origin of truth, and leading as well into the ontological framework of a book such as The Visible and the Invisible.

Obviously this paper cannot survey his entire project, but it intends to begin such an interpretation by presenting the way in which Merleau-Ponty related language to thought in the seminal, though often neglected works he produced during the years 1949-1953.

Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception centralized the problems of perception, expression, meaning, thought, and time; unifying them in the somewhat ambiguous analysis of time treated in the penultimate chapter. The works of the period from 1949 to 1953 focus in a more delimited manner upon the problems surrounding a philosophy of language and especially the genesis of meaning in language. He attempts to identify more clearly that "nascent logos" which he says perception is, that logos which makes us vocalize a mute world. In order to understand the foundedness of thought in more detail he strove to mediate perception and thought with an interpretation of language. Perception, he tells us, is an event which opens upon a truth and which founds the new order of thought. We can see clearly the relation between perception and knowledge then, only by loosening "the intentional web which ties them to one another," by rediscovering "the pathos of the sublimation which preserves and transforms the perceived world into the spoken world" (PW, pp. 123-124).

In the prospectus of his work written in 1952, he described the purpose of his works in progress in several ways. He says that he wants to show how communication with others (especially language), and thought, "take up and go beyond the realm of perception that initiated us to the truth" (Pr, p. 3). Involved in this project would be the explication of a foundation for a new theory of truth. He describes The Prose of the World on which he was working at the time, as an attempt to "elaborate the category of prose beyond the confines of literature to give it a sociological meaning" (Pr, p. 9). He tries to unfold how language, institution, history, and inter-subjectivity mutually implicate each other and require a comprehensive treatment. Indeed, the studies of expression and truth are envisioned as approaching "from the epistemological side, the general problem of human interrelations—which will be the major topic of my later studies" (Pr, p. 9). It is becoming clear then how the concentric problems of philosophy are beginning to arrange themselves around the central core of human in-