Ordinary Language Philosophy as Phenomenological Research: Reading Austin with Merleau-Ponty

Lars Leeten, *University of Hildesheim*

Abstract

In his late 'A Plea for Excuses', John L. Austin suggests labelling his philosophy 'linguistic phenomenology'. This article examines which idea of phenomenology Austin had in mind when he coined this term and what light this sheds on his method. It is argued that the key to answering this question can be found in Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, which Austin must have been familiar with. Merleau-Ponty presents phenomenology in a way Austin could embrace: it is a method, it aims at description and uses reduction, it is a non-idealistic study of essence and interprets intentionality as 'operative'. In this light, Austin's method can be appreciated more fully.

I. Introduction

It is commonly supposed that phenomenology and modern philosophy of language are naturally opposed to each other. Today this opposition often manifests itself in indifference. In the first half of the 20th century, however, the relationship had not yet been settled. At their start, the two movements might well have been perceived as closely related, as two different counter-movements against psychologism.[1] At the time, Gilbert Ryle, for example, was still aware that phenomenology shared his own interest in the origins of sense and meaning and the structures of consciousness, and he returned to the topic frequently. He was, in other words, far from indifferent to phenomenology – even though he was certain that it was "heading for bankruptcy and disaster and will end either in self-ruinous Subjectivism or in a windy mysticism."[2] To this day such harsh judgements are to be expected wherever linguistic

---

1. See Dummett (1993: 21–25).
2. Ryle (1928: 222); see also Ryle (1932) and Ryle (1962).

philosophy, especially when driven by logical analysis, takes notice of phenomenology. Even when phenomenological themes emerge in philosophy of language itself, like in the late Wittgenstein, the two schools of thought nevertheless remain separated and a genuine dialogue hardly takes place.[3]

It is therefore more than surprising that John L. Austin, in his article "A Plea for Excuses" from 1956, suggests that his brand of philosophy of language might be called *linguistic phenomenology*. This label is perplexing for many reasons and the question of exactly what it is supposed to mean has yet to be answered. Of course, it is tempting not to take Austin's suggestion seriously. Given the way he introduces the concept in "A Plea for Excuses," Austin himself seems to struggle with it. But it is nonetheless obvious that the label results from careful consideration:

> In view of the prevalence of the slogan 'ordinary language', and of such names as 'linguistic' or 'analytic' philosophy or 'the analysis of language', one thing needs specially emphasizing to counter misunderstandings. When we examine what we should say when, what words we should use in what situations, we are looking again not *merely* at words (or 'meanings', whatever they may be) but also at the realities we use the words to talk about: we are using a sharpened awareness of words to sharpen our perception of, though not as the final arbiter of, the phenomena. For this reason I think it might be better to use, for this way of doing philosophy, some less misleading name than those given above – for instance, 'linguistic phenomenology', only that is rather a mouthful.[4]

In this passage, Austin is defending himself against the objection of 'linguistic idealism', as was raised by his day-to-day opponent Ayer in particular. And while he introduces the notion of 'linguistic phenomenology' rather hesitantly, he does so with the explicit intent of finding a 'less misleading name'. Stanley Cavell, one of the few commentators who take the label seriously, remarks that Austin "apologizes" for it but "does not retract it."[5] Therefore, it has to be assumed that it is well chosen. This should not come as a surprise since there is hardly an author as obsessed with the subtle distinctions of language as Austin was. It simply does not seem likely that he could have chosen a term as laden and provocative as 'phenomenology' without having good reasons for doing so. But what specific idea did he have in mind? Why did he pick

---

3. Later research, of course, more than once pointed to parallels between the movements, especially between Wittgenstein and Heidegger. For recent examples see Egan *et al.* (2013) and Egan (2019); for historical backgrounds see Chase and Reynolds (2017).
4. Austin (1956: 182).
5. Cavell (1965: 99).

'phenomenology' of all terms to characterise his philosophical endeavour? A clarification would certainly contribute to a better understanding of Austin's philosophical method and ordinary language philosophy in general.

There are only a few, usually half-hearted attempts to answer this question. Most of them date back to the two decades after Austin's death in 1960 and are more or less forgotten today. Strikingly, the earliest attempts appear to be the most constructive. In a general discussion on phenomenology and linguistic analysis from 1959, Charles Taylor briefly points to parallels between Austin and Husserl.[6] The context reminds the reader that, in the 1950s, efforts to achieve a dialogue between 'analytic' and 'continental' philosophy were still ambitious;[7] and although Ayer's response to Taylor is highly sceptical (and does not touch on Austin) it might come as a surprise that Ayer exhibits such sound knowledge about phenomenology, more specifically about Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception.[8] However, the interest in dialogue dwindles over time. When in 1966 Walter Cerf writes his review of *How To Do Things With Words*, he still feels the need to discuss the links between Austin and continental thought but he clearly feels uncomfortable with the idea of linguistic phenomenology. When he concludes that "Austin happens to start on a road that turns out to be somewhat similar to the road leading from Husserl to Heidegger"[9] he alludes to a perceived tendency in phenomenology of turning towards the more holistic perspectives of existentialism and anthropology.[10] In this view, Austin's terminology simply reflects the insight that philosophy cannot dispense with the more general questions of human self-understanding. Later explanations, then, tend to be even more vague and are soon forgotten.[11] When in 1975 Robert L. Arrington asks whether a linguistic phenomenology is possible, the term 'phenomenology' itself is not discussed anymore. It simply

---

6. Taylor in Taylor and Ayer (1959: 106f).
7. The most famous manifestation of these efforts is the colloquium of Royaumont in 1958, which yielded mixed results at best. See the Cahiers de Royaumont (1962) and Taylor (1964).
8. Ayer in Taylor and Ayer (1959: 111–117).
9. Cerf (1966: 379).
10. See Cerf (1966: 376): "When Austin called himself a linguistic phenomenologist, he must have had in mind, not the transcendental constitutive phenomenology of Husserl, but the popular descriptive phenomenology of Husserl's followers." Cerf seems to refer to Heidegger.
11. For the most part, commentators simply point to superficial similarities between Austin and Husserl. See Manser (1975: 111f), Durfee (1971), Meyn (1972) or Harris (1976). More ambitious attempts of reconciling linguistic and continental phenomenology are scarce; see Gill (1973).

stands for Austin's method, which is rejected as "a mere play of words, much ado about nothing."[12]

Recent research usually remains silent on the issue altogether.[13] The question of in what sense Austin's thinking could be understood as 'phenomenological' is still not settled. This is why I will readdress the issue in the following. Given the distanced, often contemptuous way the proponents of Oxford philosophy treated phenomenology, Austin must have had good reasons to label his endeavour as a type of it. I will argue that a more thorough understanding of this terminological choice can help to elaborate the phenomenological strands to be found in Austin, especially as outlined in his "A Plea for Excuses" from 1956. Austin had a specific idea of what phenomenology is, and he knew what he was doing when he suggested, albeit not without hesitation, to classify his way of thinking as a branch of phenomenology.

Contrary to earlier discussions, I will start with the premise that in the case of Austin it is misguided to use Husserl and Heidegger as reference points. Since there is no reason to believe that Austin absorbed works like *Being and Time* it is futile to explain 'linguistic phenomenology' as if this were the case. Instead, the *one* phenomenologist who we *know* Austin read has to be brought into focus: Maurice Merleau-Ponty. That Merleau-Ponty never entered the picture in the debate on Austinian phenomenology is remarkable, since, as the example of Ayer shows, it is certain that he was discussed in Oxford. In fact, a closer look can reveal that Merleau-Ponty offered an understanding of phenomenology that Austin could have embraced. A thorough investigation can thus help to clarify why he considered labelling his approach as a branch of phenomenology and what exactly he had in mind when he did so. This, in turn, will contribute to a refined understanding of Austin's method.

In what follows, I will discuss this issue on historical and systematic grounds. First I will show why Merleau-Ponty is the appropriate reference point for the discussion (II) and what exactly Austin must have found in his writings (III). Subsequently, I will ask why Merleau-Ponty's conception of phenomenology could have attracted Austin and how he might have adopted elements of his methodology, first in a more general fashion (IV) and then by examining Austin's method in more detail (V and VI). The article concludes with the suggestion that many of the problems with Austin's 'linguistic phenomenology' derive from the fact that the difference between philosophical *method* and philosophical *theory* is underestimated (VII).

---

12. Arrington (1975: 304).
13. See, e.g., Gustafsson and Sørli (2012).

II. Merleau-Ponty in Oxford

Since the literature on Austin hardly ever mentions his name,[14] it might seem odd to use Merleau-Ponty as the main point of reference in discussing phenomenological strands in Oxford philosophy. On closer inspection, however, this approach promises to be wholly suitable. It is hard to imagine that Austin wanted to align himself with Husserl and Heidegger. Here is a gap that cannot be bridged. Austin must have had in mind an alternative picture of 'phenomenology' when he considered using this label. And Merleau-Ponty, a trained psychologist with a more empiricist spirit, could clearly provide such an alternative. The *Phenomenology of Perception*, originally published in 1945, certainly had something to offer to the Oxonians. That an exemplary analytic philosopher like Ayer discusses it at length, points to the fact that Merleau-Ponty's work indeed figured in contemporary debates, such as on sense data. While this line of dialogue between 'analytic' and 'continental' philosophy is more or less forgotten today, it was still alive in the 1950s. Hence, it would be odd to think that Austin was *not* aware of Merleau-Ponty's thinking.

Furthermore, there is solid evidence that Austin in fact studied Merleau-Ponty. In his report on Austin and his circle, Geoffrey J. Warnock describes a series of Saturday morning meetings that were devoted to close reading. According to Warnock, the aim on these occasions was "to get absolutely clear on what was said in, and meant by, the text before us," and Austin is said to have pursued this aim "by taking the sentences *one at a time*."[15] Only five philosophers are mentioned in this context: Aristotle, Wittgenstein, Frege, Chomsky and Merleau-Ponty. This confirms that Austin was familiar with Merleau-Ponty's conception of phenomenology, and not just by hearsay but also through careful reading. In other words, Merleau-Ponty is the *only* phenomenologist Austin is known to have studied.

There can be little doubt that the *Phenomenology of Perception* must have been the textual basis of Austin's phenomenological studies. The first English translation of this work would not be published until 1962, but Austin, who spent enough time in France during the war and mastered the language well enough to write his paper "Performativ-Constatif" in French,[16] would have had no difficulties reading the

---

14. A notable exception is Charles Taylor in the article mentioned above, although Austin and Merleau-Ponty are not directly connected here; see Taylor and Ayer (1959). Cerf refers to Merleau-Ponty twice in his review of Austin's *How to do things with words*, but only in passing and as a representative of existentialism; see Cerf (1966: 352 and 369).
15. Warnock (1973: 36). In his 'biographical sketch' of Austin's life, Warnock attributes this habit to Austin's training as a classical scholar; see Warnock (1963: 34).
16. See Urmson and Warnock (1969).

original. That the *Phénoménologie de la Perception* was not only talked about but also actually read in Oxford at the time can be substantiated by Ayer's paper, which refers to this work repeatedly.[17] If we use this as a benchmark for Austin, it is reasonable to assume that he was at least as acquainted to Merleau-Ponty as his colleague and frequent interlocutor. This means that he must have known the preface of the *Phenomenology of Perception* and the chapters I to IV, that go under the heading "Introduction: Traditional prejudices and the return to phenomena." These portions can at the same time be regarded as highly relevant for the discussions on perception in Oxford at the time. In his response to Taylor, Ayer mentions the "early chapters of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*" that he takes to argue against the "sense datum-theory of perception."[18]

What specific part of this work Austin discussed with his students is, of course, hard to determine. If we follow Warnock, there must have been some kind of close reading; but his account only mentions that in connection to Merleau-Ponty "problems of perception" were discussed.[19] If it is true that Austin and his circle took 'the sentences *one at a time*', as Warnock reports, the discussion was conceivably based on the French original, Austin providing an *ad-hoc*-translation. Indeed, since Colin Smith's English version of the *Phenomenology of Perception* was not yet available, this scenario is the most likely. However, a translation of the *preface* of this work might already have been in circulation at Oxford: it was released by John F. Bannan in 1956, under the title "What is phenomenology?".[20] It is possible, although less likely, that this text played a role too. Either way, the fact that the preface was translated at the time gives an insight into what parts of Merleau-Ponty's work were of interest to English-speaking philosophers.[21]

Whatever the exact circumstances were, we can safely assume that Austin studied the first chapters of the *Phenomenology of Perception* in the 1950s, a time during which he dealt with the issues discussed in "A Plea for Excuses." And if we stick to the question of what concept of phenomenology Austin had in mind when he coined the label 'linguistic phenomenology' the *preface* of Merleau-Ponty's work will certainly provide the best answer. This text begins by asking "What is phenomenology?" and it gives a straightforward answer to this question. In the

---

17. See Taylor and Ayer (1959: 114–117). It is also the only phenomenologist actually cited by Charles Taylor in the same discussion; see Taylor and Ayer (1959: 95f and 102f).
18. Taylor and Ayer (1959: 113f).
19. Warnock (1973: 39).
20. See Merleau-Ponty (1956).
21. For the history – and the deficiencies – of early English translations of Merleau-Ponty see Guerrière (1979) and Noble (2019).

following sections, I will spell out Merleau-Ponty's concept of phenomenology and the light it sheds on Austin's method.

III. Austin reading Merleau-Ponty

In order to find out what Austin might have seen in the *Phenomenology of Perception* the hermeneutical situation has to be taken into account: Merleau-Ponty's thinking – his analysis of one's 'own body' (*corps-propre*) – was not as well known as it is now, let alone his later ideas of 'flesh' or 'the visible' and 'the invisible'. What best suits present purposes is a simple account of which concept of phenomenology is conveyed by the preface as Austin would have found it. In this spirit, I will highlight five aspects that the text discusses one by one: (a) phenomenology is a *method*; (b) it does not explain but *describes*; (c) it proceeds by way of *reduction*; (d) it is a non–idealistic study of *essence*; and (e) and it revolves around *intentionality*.

(a) Merleau-Ponty remarks at the outset that it might seem puzzling that the question he starts with – 'What is phenomenology?' – is not yet settled. The concept appears to be indeterminate or even paradoxical; the Husserlian explanations of phenomenology as a transcendental 'study of essence' or 'strict science' form a stark contrast to the interest in factuality and prereflective experience that Heidegger is well known for. According to Merleau-Ponty, however, these two elements represent two sides of one and the same idea: the contradiction disappears as soon as the *methodological* sense of the concept of phenomenology is taken into account. Thus the first aspect Merleau-Ponty emphasises is that phenomenology is not a doctrine or a system but rather a method. It is a "*manner*" or "*style*," it "*exists as a movement.*"[22] Indeed he indicates that phenomenology makes a confusing impression only if this fact is underestimated, as it "is only accessible through a phenomenological method."[23]

The idea of phenomenology as a method can be regarded as a guiding theme of the preface of the *Phenomenology of Perception*. It will reappear at the end where Merleau-Ponty claims that phenomenology can never be completed and therefore necessarily *remains* a movement rather than a fixed doctrine; it can never be a closed system but only an "infinite

---

22. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 8) – Citations are from David A. Landes' edition of the *Phenomenology of Perception*. I use the pagination from the French edition from 2005, which is included in Landes' edition. Translations have been reconciled with the French original and occasionally been revised.
23. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 8).

dialogue or meditation."[24] As a progressing work of world disclosure, it will be misunderstood when treated like a system of beliefs. Its unity lies in a certain *way* of philosophising.

(b) How exactly is this philosophising characterised? Clearly, it proceeds by *describing*. Phenomenology is guided by a "demand for a pure description,"[25] which implies that it has to avoid *explaining* the world. This is what Husserl's famous slogan 'to the things themselves' points to: there is an experience of the world that precedes explanation and into which all representations of the world are already embedded. "To return to the things themselves is to return to this world prior to knowledge, this world of which knowledge always *speaks*, and this world with regard to which every scientific determination is abstract, signitive and dependent, just like geography with regard to the landscape where we first learned what a forest, a meadow or a river is."[26]

Returning to a prereflective world that has to be described rather than explained, as its experience is already operative in explanations, amounts to returning to the world of *perception*. This is why Merleau-Ponty's enterprise, as he himself points out, has to be distinguished from any transcendental analysis in the wake of Descartes or Kant. "The real is to be described, and neither constructed nor constituted. This means that I cannot assimilate perception to the syntheses that belong to the order of judgment, acts or predication."[27] The reference point is the world as it is perceived. "The real is a tightly woven fabric; it does not wait for our judgments [...]."[28] In this respect, phenomenology differs categorically from any *idealistic* analysis of the mind, because it does not culminate in *disengagement* from the world. Thinking, to be sure, means taking a reflective distance. But "my reflection is a reflection upon an unreflected,"[29] and in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, this unreflected experience, the world of perception, is never nullified and replaced by pure thoughts.

(c) A 'demand for a pure description', of course, is hard to fulfil; it implies the demand for suppressing explanations. This is no easy undertaking, since we naturally tend to see the world in the light of theoretical preconceptions. This is why *reduction* plays a central role in phenomenology. According to Merleau-Ponty, there is, again, a tendency to misinterpret phenomenological reduction as aiming at a transcendental consciousness in a Cartesian sense, a general structure that all individual

---

24. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 21).
25. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 9).
26. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 9).
27. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 10).
28. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 11).
29. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 10).

minds take part in. However, the whole point of reduction, as he views it, is that such an idealistic standpoint can never be taken. It is impossible to turn everything into an element of one unified consciousness and thereby to overcome the embodied mind, which is situated in the world and relates to it. In this perspective, reduction is a way of *distancing* one-self from the world in order to become aware of one's *involvement* with the world. "Because we are through and through related to the world, the only way for us to catch sight of ourselves is by suspending this movement, by refusing to be complicit with it."[30] We gain insight into our fundamental 'being in the world' not by disengaging from the world but by "loosen[ing] the intentional threads that connect us to the world."[31] Such a process, however, is never-ending: while idealism has an ultimate goal in its intention to reduce the world to representation, phenomenological reduction is designed to begin again and again. "The most important lesson of the reduction is the impossibility of a complete reduction."[32] That the method falls short does not mean it has failed; it simply means there is no ultimate goal. In phenomenology, like in phi-losophy, we always remain beginners.

(d) Against this background, the phenomenological 'study of *essence*' can also be given a non-idealistic meaning. In Merleau-Ponty's view, it is an integral part of the method of reduction, which can therefore right-fully be called 'eidetic reduction'. Here, 'essence' does not refer to abstract entities existing in and for themselves. Properly understood, it is a *methodological* concept figuring in the procedure of reduction. The "essence is clearly not the goal but rather a means."[33] By studying eidetic forms we can learn about our own being in the world. It is a mistake, according to Merleau-Ponty, to reconstruct essences as forms of con-sciousness in an absolute sense, independent of our ongoing engagement with the world. It is true that our world is not made of facts but of forms, but these forms are not ideas but rather 'structures of behaviour'. This is why any attempt to explore concepts and meanings as if they were separate entities is misleading. For this reason, "logical positivism is the antithesis of Husserl's thought".[34]

Interestingly, Merleau-Ponty also recommends a way in which a 'study of essence' should proceed: it only makes sense as a study of *lan-guage* or, more precisely, of language *as it relates to the world*. In this way, consciousness is not reduced to essence and its factual fundamentals are

---

30. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 13).
31. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 14).
32. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 14).
33. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 15).
34. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 15).

accounted for. "Seeking the essence of the world is not to seek what it is as an idea, after having reduced it to a theme of discourse; rather, it is to seek what it in fact is for us, prior to every thematisation."[35] The pitfalls of idealistic philosophy are to be avoided. The prereflective world of perception cannot be grounded on something other than itself.

(e) In Merleau-Ponty's view of phenomenology, intentionality has to be explained along similar lines. Like with 'reduction' and 'essence', an idealistic account of intentionality will be misleading. Bodily minds neither grasp timeless ideas nor relate to fixed entities or unvarying objects. Rather, they are always in motion, constantly grappling with the world, being involved in it, exploring its many sides – and this in the face of other minds that the self is exposed to. Intentionality, then, is not a stable relation to what we perceive but a dynamic way of relating and perceiving. It is an activity between the self, the world, and others; it is "operative intentionality."[36]

Undertaking phenomenology, in this view, means describing this operative intentionality. For this purpose, the fundamental perceptual experience of the world and others has to be traced. In Merleau-Ponty's view, this undertaking can never be completed, which is why phenomenology can only be a practice and never a closed system or doctrine. It is an endless task of description; its unfinished nature is neither coincidence nor failure. This is what Merleau-Ponty has in mind at the outset when he emphasises that phenomenology is only accessible as a method. For a practice of world disclosure, it would be inappropriate to aim at some final goal. It does not even have to aim at theory building in a narrow sense. Like philosophy in general, phenomenology is an exercise in "learning to see the world anew,"[37] and this learning process is never-ending. "The world is not what I think, but what I live; I am open to the world, I unquestionably communicate with it, but I do not possess it, it is inexhaustible."[38]

IV. Phenomenological themes in Austin

For Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology is necessarily a *method*, a never-ending practice of *describing* the world; it uses 'eidetic *reduction*', but not in order to reduce the world to *essence* but in order to carve out our involvement with the world; and it develops a picture of *operative*

---

35. Merleau–Ponty (1945: 16).
36. Merleau–Ponty (1945: 18).
37. Merleau–Ponty (1945: 21).
38. Merleau–Ponty (1945: 17).

intentionality as a dynamic process between the self, the world and others. If this account in fact reflects what Austin had in mind when he coined the label 'linguistic phenomenology' – what does this say about his method? The question, to be clear, is not in how far Austin was influenced by Merleau-Ponty or if ordinary language philosophy originated in French thought. Rather, we ask what light the concept outlined above sheds on Austin. If Merleau-Ponty offered an understanding of phenomenology Austin felt comfortable enough with to consider owning it – what does this reveal about his way of philosophising? How does it present itself in this light?

For a start, it will be helpful to outline in a more general way why this version of phenomenology might have been interesting to Austin. For the moment, we will leave aside the inquiry into the many ways, "in which to *say* something is to *do* something," as it is famously conducted in *How To Do Things With Words*.[39] The general thrust from which this conception originates is more significant for present purposes: From early on, Austin is guided by the idea of developing a *non-idealistic* theory of language that accounts for how linguistic meaning is embedded in the real world. Even his work on ancient Greek thinking from the 1930s can be read in this light.[40] Later he will remark that Aristotle, unlike Plato and, for that matter, "Polish semanticists," at least aimed at studying "*actual* languages, not ideal ones".[41] The paper "Are There *A Priori* Concepts?" underlines this antiplatonist thrust as it is devoted to showing that "on the whole there is remarkably little to be said in favour of 'universals', even as an admitted logical construction".[42] Likewise, in "The Meaning of a Word," Austin insists that any *general* talk of 'meaning' is empty; taken in an absolute sense, it is "quite as fictitious an entity as any 'Platonic idea'".[43] The need for a non-idealistic view of how linguistic beings make sense of the world is one of the deepest motives in Austin's thinking.

This is why the idea of studying "semantic conventions [...] about the way we use words in *situations*"[44] dates back to Austin's early work as well. Any theory of meaning that ignores that speech is principally situational will be flawed. Austin is fully aware of the fact that this approach is incompatible with the type of conceptual reconstruction analytic philosophy is usually concerned with. "An *actual* language has few,

---

39. Austin (1962: 12).
40. See Austin (1967) and Austin (1979). The papers were written before 1940; see Urmson and Warnock (1969) for a timeline.
41. Austin (1940: 70).
42. Austin (1939: 40).
43. Austin (1940: 61).
44. Austin (1940: 64).

if any, explicit conventions, no sharp limits to the spheres of operation of rules, no rigid separation of what is syntactical and what semantical."[45] The misconception that language must be a system of rules and fixed meanings will lead to a distorted idea of how it functions in the real world. "If we talk as though an ordinary must be like an ideal language, we shall misrepresent the facts."[46]

When Austin in the last lecture of *How To Do Things With Words* identifies the "total speech act in the total speech situation" as "the *only actual* phenomenon which, in the last resort, we are engaged in elucidating,"[47] he is only coming back to a topic he has been struggling with for years. He must have long been convinced that linguistic forms are not representations that picture the world but rather a way of dealing with the world. And although it remains an open question whether or not Austin himself believed that the many ways 'we use words in situations' could ever be captured it is certain that we do not find a clear-cut 'speech act theory' in Austin. In the last decade of his life, he still must have been searching for a non-idealistic view of how the mind makes sense of the world. And it must have been striking to him that this was exactly what Merleau-Ponty's 'operative intentionality' was aiming at.

In fact, the passage in "A Plea for Excuses" where Austin comes up with the label 'linguistic phenomenology' clearly shows that it is designed precisely to be an antidote to linguistic idealism: "When we examine what we should say when, what words we should use in what situations," he writes, "we are looking again not *merely* at words (or 'meanings', whatever they may be) but also at the realities we use the words to talk about [. . .]."[48] Just like when Merleau-Ponty emphasises that the mind is not a separate entity but an active way of dealing with the world and others, Austin emphasises that linguistic forms are meaningful not by themselves but only when applied to real situations. Like how Merleau-Ponty conceives of intentionality as 'operative', Austin conceives of meanings as 'operative meanings'.

Therefore, Stanley Cavell is certainly right when he takes the label of phenomenology as indicating that "the clarity Austin seeks in philosophy is to be achieved through mapping the fields of consciousness lit by the occasions of a word, not through analysing or replacing a given word by others".[49] Similarly, Charles Taylor is right when he suggests that exploring "what we would say if . . ." is being engaged in a study of

---

45. Austin (1940: 67).
46. Austin (1940: 68).
47. Austin (1962: 148).
48. Austin (1956: 182).
49. Cavell (1965: 100).

essence and that this is "a parallel which Professor Austin seems to welcome in using the term phenomenology".[50] Yet, it is not Husserl's version, as Taylor indicates when he uses the expression "Husserlian *Wesensschau*," but Merleau-Ponty's decidedly non-idealistic study of essence, or else, every inquiry of meaning would be phenomenology. For Austin, eidetic forms can only be a methodological idea, and he explicitly says so. "To say something about 'concepts' is sometimes a convenient way of saying something complicated about sensa [. . .], including symbols and images, and about our use of them."[51] But the underlying assumption is that the actual use of language in situations cannot be determined with reference to concepts only.

How, then, can it be studied? There are good reasons to assume that around 1955 this question becomes more pressing for Austin. His attempts to systematise the use of language can hardly be called an unbridled success, and his late papers often emphasise what a gigantic enterprise a proper theory of 'speech acts' would be. In "A Plea for Excuses," Austin's pessimism even pertains to the concept of *action* itself. If actions are always embedded in situations, then there is no way of determining certain events as a particular action without taking the surrounding circumstances into account. Austin, however, is convinced that "no situation [. . .] is ever 'completely' described".[52] There are countless aspects of a situation that may or may not influence how we interpret it. Human activities can be structured in different ways; every description of an action can be enlarged; and questions as to whether a description is appropriate or not cannot be discussed without reference to intentions. The circumstances of our actions are "over-rich," as Austin once put it.[53] This is why our actions cannot be regarded as a chain of natural facts.

Thus, the task of accounting for actual linguistic practice turns out to be more than challenging. And since Austin would not take comfort in the fact that theory essentially goes along with simplification,[54] it is no wonder that he was concerned with fundamental questions of method. Merleau-Ponty's understanding of phenomenology must have played right into these considerations. Austin could hardly have overseen that the notions of 'operative intentionality' and a non-idealistic 'study of essence' reflected methodological issues of the same sort he struggled

---

50. Taylor and Ayer (1959: 106).
51. Austin (1939: 39f).
52. Austin (1956: 184).
53. Austin (1962: 6).
54. See Austin (1962: 38): "And we must at all costs avoid over-simplification, which one might be tempted to call the occupational disease of philosophers if it were not their occupation."

with. And although one may doubt that he would have liked the idea of a *never-ending* practice of describing the world, Merleau-Ponty certainly offered a specific *method* for exploring the 'inexhaustible' realm of human experience.

But what *use* could Austin really make of it? One might assume that his philosophical outlook was too different from his French counterpart's so that, even if he somehow sympathised with Merleau-Ponty's endeavour, he would not have been able to see his own philosophising in the same light. His tentative adoption of the label 'phenomenology', however, suggests otherwise. It points to the fact that Austin found a soulmate in Merleau-Ponty, regarding not only his general beliefs on mind and meaning but also on his concrete procedures. The remaining sections are devoted to the question of how Austin's method can be interpreted as a proper branch of phenomenology.

V. An Exercise in Description: Austin's 'Field Studies'

How does linguistic phenomenology actually work? Austin does not provide a comprehensive account. Yet, in his late papers, particularly in "A Plea for Excuses" and "Three Ways of Spilling Ink," we find several methodological explanations that deserve attention. Another valuable source is James O. Urmson's report of Austin's teaching at Oxford, its point of departure being exactly the fact that it is difficult to draw Austin's method from his writings alone.[55] Although Urmson never uses the term 'phenomenology' but simply speaks of a 'technique' instead, his account in many respects matches with Austin's own indications. Therefore the workings of 'linguistic phenomenology' can be reconstructed on this basis.

According to Urmson, the method was divided into the stages of *field studies*, *reaching agreement* and *theory building*. It is important to keep in mind, however, that in his published writings Austin did not present his method in this way. Although some of the elements Urmson describes can easily be recognised in "A Plea for Excuses,"[56] there is no mention of chronological order or 'stages'. Nevertheless, Urmson's arrangement is of great heuristic value, and the reconstruction can proceed along the

---

55. See Urmson (1965: 77). – Urmson used some notes of Austin's titled "Something about one way of possibly doing one part of philosophy", which, as far as the author knows, remain unpublished. The short excerpt Urmson provides (1965: 83) may explain why.
56. See Urmson (1965: 77-81) und Austin (1956: 181-189).

three stages he outlines.[57] This section revolves around the idea of *field studies*.

First of all, the *descriptive* intention of the technique should be evident. Austin's inquiry into 'what we should say when' or 'what words we should use in what situations' sets out to present ordinary language *as it is*. According to Urmson, its aim is "to give as full, clear and accurate an account as possible of the expression (words, idioms, sentences and grammatical forms) of some language, or variety of language, common to those who are engaged in using the technique".[58] In "Three Ways of Spilling Ink," Austin writes that the application of his method will lead to "nothing more than an account of certain ordinary 'concepts' employed by English speakers: but also at no less a thing".[59]

Yet, one thing has to be noted: Describing linguistic practice 'as it is' means describing how a particular (native) speaker's community *ordinarily* uses a natural language, and this implies certain *standards*. It is clear from the beginning that the description is not a simple 'empirical' representation of all the sloppy ways of speech we encounter on a daily basis. This is reflected by the first person plural in the central question of ordinary language philosophy 'what *we* would say when'. The inquiry has the form of a "group introspection," as W.V.O. Quine calls it;[60] it concerns 'our' use of 'our' language. But any account of how 'we' speak will have normative implications; it will imply standards of who counts as a member of the speaker's community, and it will inevitably be an account of how the group of speakers is *willing* to use 'their' language. This is why the widespread reservation about ordinary language philosophy that it blindly assimilates to the linguistic disorder of everyday life is mistaken. While Austin is not engaged in a rational reconstruction of conceptual systems his method does not reduce to uncritical empirical reproduction of daily speech either. When he writes, as quoted above, that his inquiry concerns "certain ordinary 'concepts' employed by English speakers" he uses the word 'concept', albeit in inverted commas, because his method, although it centres on linguistic activities in the real world, is nevertheless a study of *essence*. While it is interested in '*operative* meanings', it is still an inquiry into *meanings*.

---

57. It should be noted that the following description of Austin's method benefitted immensely from two seminars on linguistic phenomenology that the author was able to conduct at the University of Hildesheim in 2016 and 2019. The attempt to put Austin's method into practice, which these seminars were devoted to, was clarifying in many respects.
58. Urmson (1965: 77).
59. Austin (1958: 274).
60. Quine (1965: 87). Similarly, Stanley Cavell regards the methods of ordinary language philosophy as "methods for acquiring self-knowledge" (1962: 66).

How, then, can such an inquiry proceed? How do we know what forms of speech we find appropriate in certain situations? This is precisely the problem Austin's method sets out to solve. Since it is impossible to describe a natural language as a whole, the first step is to choose a certain subject matter or "area of discourse," examples being responsibility, perception, memory, artefacts or discourse in the present tense.[61] Austin emphasises that topics that have *not* already been the object of philosophical inquiry are preferable. Traditional areas of philosophy are more intractable to phenomenology "for in that case even 'ordinary' language will have become infected with the jargon of extinct theories, and our own prejudices too, as the upholders and imbibers of theoretical views, will be too readily, and often insensibly, engaged".[62] That Austin was serious about this is confirmed by Urmson, who remembers his teacher insisting "that beginners on the technique should choose areas that were not already philosophical stamping grounds".[63]

This guideline indicates that one of the main features of phenomenological research figures prominently in Austin's method: *reduction*. From its very beginning, his method demands the suppression of theoretical preconceptions. This is a central theme when the real work begins with the stage of *field studies*. Here, the task is to observe and collect the ways expressions are used in the chosen area of discourse, with the help of free association, the study of domain-specific texts – philosophical texts explicitly excluded – and, famously, by reading the dictionary.[64] In this connection, of course, the notorious 'lists' of Oxford philosophy were generated. They turn out to illustrate the suppression of explanations as is essential to phenomenological work. According to Urmson's report, Austin "always insisted" that during the first two stages of the inquiry "all theorising should be rigidly excluded," since "[p]remature theorising can blind us to the linguistic facts" and "premature theorisers bend their idiom to suit the theory".[65] This methodological maxim is crucial to Austin's technique.

While ordinary language philosophy is often suspected to aim at a simple reproduction of linguistic behaviour, Austin himself was well aware that a pure description of how 'we' actually use language is by no means easy to accomplish. It takes some method such as provided by phenomenological reduction. However, it is not enough to simply 'register' the uses in an area of discourse.[66] It not only takes reduction but

---

61. See Urmson (1965: 77f).
62. Austin (1956: 182f).
63. Urmson (1965: 78).
64. See Urmson (1965: 78f) and Austin (1956: 186–189).
65. Urmson (1965: 80).
66. That this is true for the first stage as well is revealed by Urmson's remark that "a useful collection of terms and idioms requires art und judgment" (1965: 78).

'*eidetic* reduction' to carve out 'ordinary language'. This will become even clearer at the second stage, where a group of speakers has to agree about how they actually use language.

VI. 'Reaching Agreement': Austin's Study of Essence

After completing the first stage the research team will have produced a large collection of terms and idioms used in the chosen area of discourse. Inevitably, this collection has to be refined in some way. This is the task of the second stage, where the question 'what we would say when' is answered in more detail. At this stage, it becomes most obvious that Austin's pure description does not aim at registering linguistic occurrences but rather at a 'study of essence'. At the same time, the themes of 'operative intentionality' come up more prominently, particularly the theme of intersubjectivity. It will be helpful to first take a look at how Urmson describes the second stage:

> Having collected its terms and idioms, the group must then proceed to the second stage in which, by telling circumstantial stories and conducting dialogues, they give as clear and detailed examples as possible of circumstances under which this idiom is preferred to that and that to this, and of where we should (do) use this term and where that. [...] It is also important to tell stories and make dialogues as like as possible to those in which we should employ a certain term or idiom in which it would not be possible, or would strike us as inappropriate, to use that term or idiom. We should also note things which it is not possible to say in any circumstances, though not manifestly ungrammatical or otherwise absurd (Aristotle's observation that one cannot be pleased quickly or slowly is the sort of thing that is meant here). This second stage will occupy several sessions; it is not a matter to be completed in a few minutes.[67]

How can questions of the type 'What do we say when?' be tackled? Clearly, the group or, as Urmson prefers to say, the 'team' now plays a more central role. That Austin's method is suitable for collective work was emphasised for the first stage as well; but at this second stage the group is significant for *principled* reasons: "The device of a statistical survey of 'what people would say' by means of a questionnaire is no substitute for the group [...]."[68] But why not?

Urmson's report sometimes gives the impression that collective work simply allows for effectiveness, division of labour and mutual corrections. In fact, however, the group is crucial for more fundamental reasons. If

---

67. Urmson (1965: 79).
68. Urmson (1965: 80).

we use operative intentionality as a benchmark, one of the difficulties Austin faces derives from the fact that the situational use of language cannot be grasped without regard to the *attitudes* persons take to situations. This is the more fundamental issue behind Urmson's remark that the group is important because it is "its own sample".[69] Asking 'what we would say when' is not asking for certain states of affairs *in* the (natural) world, but rather for *appropriate* judgements *about* the (social) world. To settle such questions, individual speakers cannot draw on factual evidence; they can only confront their judgements with other judgements, i.e., with the judgements of other native speakers. Asking 'what we would say when' is not about external *facts* at all, as Cavell points out.[70] It is a question concerning the habits built into the linguistic practice of a native speaker's community.

The importance of 'telling circumstantial stories' and 'conducting dialogues' mentioned by Urmson signifies that Austin's phenomenological method is essentially *dialogical*. It is a way of doing philosophy by means of conversation and, by the same token, an oral practice. One cannot overlook that Austin's 'method of reaching agreement' in many respects resembles Socratic dialectic that is also a practice of *homologein*, which is Greek for 'agreeing'. This might explain why Austin uses the label as if it were well known.[71] In any case, it has to be acknowledged that on many occasions his thoughts rest on a dialogical practice that lingers 'behind' his writings and is seemingly not reproducible in written arguments.[72]

Austin claims that a group will normally reach 'agreement' on what use is appropriate to a surprisingly large extent. The ways individual speakers use expressions are less diverse than one would suppose.[73] This echoes Wittgenstein's belief that communication is essentially based on an "agreement in judgements," which is "not an agreement of opinions but of the form of life".[74] But unlike Wittgenstein, Austin made an attempt to develop a technique capable of determining such patterns of *homologein*. While this technique is a resource behind the scenes, Austin clearly makes pronounced use of it when he points to the results such dialogues 'normally' yield. In the centre of 'linguistic phenomenology', in other words, we find an agreement not established by argumentative

---

69. Urmson (1965: 80).
70. See Cavell (1964: 18–22); also Warnock (1963: 14n).
71. See Austin (1958: 274), where he explicitly mentions "methods as those of 'Agreement' and 'Difference'." The ancient Greek sources of Austin's thinking are left aside here; see Austin (1956: 183n) and Austin (1958: 273).
72. See, e.g., Austin (1958: 273).
73. See, e.g., Austin (1956: 183f).
74. Wittgenstein (1953: §§ 241–242).

discourse but rather by a descriptive study of essences. The results of such inquiry, unlike those of a conceptual reconstruction within a logical framework, cannot be argued for; rather agreement can either be reached or not. In this respect, ordinary language philosophy and Merleau-Ponty's version of phenomenology are in the same boat.

VII. Concluding remarks: Philosophical method and philosophical theory

When Austin speaks of 'linguistic phenomenology' he speaks of a *method*. This seems trivial but what it entails can easily be missed. It is not unusual, although misguided, to discuss a philosophical method as if it were a philosophical theory. This is true of *linguistic philosophy* in particular, the methodological meaning of which is eliminated when it is taken as synonymous with 'philosophy *of language*. In fact, of course, linguistic philosophy can treat *any* subject matter, language being not the object but rather the means of inquiry. Therefore the difference between method and theory in philosophy should not be underestimated. I will conclude with some remarks why this is important for ordinary language philosophy.

First, it is not self-evident that a philosophical method can be acquired solely on the basis of a written text. It is a *practice*, the workings of which have to be trained and exercised. Often a written text will only be able to hint at a method, not convey it, such as by specifying its 'rules'. Therefore it is no coincidence that Austin does not give us a complete picture of his method. Urmson states that this "technique, like other research techniques, could not be fully exhibited in action in the conventional book, article or lecture."[75] And Austin himself remarks in "A Plea for Excuses" that he can only "introduce" his research programme in his article and "incite" the reader, "commend the subject" to him.[76] This is not modesty. It rather goes to show that what Austin has to offer in this paper is a method, not a theory.

It is important to point out that Austin's linguistic phenomenology itself was essentially an *oral practice*. As we have seen, this becomes most obvious in the case of 'reaching agreement' by dialogue. As we can tell from Urmson's report and Austin's indications, the method implied a collusion of oral and written language.[77] It seems reasonable to assume that Austin was aware of the role of *mediality*, that he knew that different

---

75. Urmson (1965: 77).
76. Austin (1956: 175 and 204).
77. See Norris (1983: 75f). This, however, does not imply that Austin would have claimed a 'priority' of speaking on writing, as Norris suggests.

media open up different possibilities and exclude others and that this can influence philosophical reflection. This should not come as a surprise, given that Austin was a trained classicist who had studied Socratic dialectic.[78]

Second, being attentive to the problem of method will remind us that philosophy does not always, as is often taken for granted, proceed by *argumentation*. Argumentation is rather one method among others. In fact, Austin's abstinence from proper arguments was puzzling to his students. Pitcher reports that he "cannot recall anything [he] ever heard, or read, of Austin's that contained a straightforward, old-fashioned philosophical *argument*."[79] Where description takes the lead, it might even be necessary to *suppress* arguments in a narrow sense. Phenomenological reduction demands explanation and analysis being suspended; it demands sticking to our actual use and abstaining from conceptual considerations. It seems compelling, if surprising, that abstaining from argumentation must have been part of this method too. One reason why distinguishing between method and theory is so important, in other words, is the fact that neglecting it will make every philosophy that does not primarily proceed by argumentation appear unclear or misguided. But argumentation is not everything, and we might need non-argumentative means to disclose the fundaments of conceptual thinking. Judging a method by its argumentative strength when it is no argumentative method will inevitably lead to distortion.[80]

Third, although methods, if properly applied, will often lead to theories, this is by no means a necessity. Austin, to be sure, sometimes talks as if his ultimate goal was in fact a complete picture of all the different ways humans use language. In this vein, Urmson reports that the second phase of 'reaching agreement' was supposed to be followed up by a construction of theories apt to explaining the use of language, to being tested on empirical grounds and to being compared with concurring theories.[81] If this report is to be trusted, Austin would not have accepted his work to be a never-ending practice, an 'infinite dialogue', as Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology explicitly is. But there is a lot to be said against such a view. Although it proves hard to give a definitive answer to this question, there are remarkably strong indications that he would have been inclined to consider his task endless. First and foremost,

---

78. Austin, for example, was familiar with scepticism in respect to writing and the thought that knowledge only comes from 'communal living' (*syzēn*) from the *Seventh Letter*, which figures in his reading of Plato; see Austin (1979: 301).
79. Pitcher (1973: 20). This is confirmed by Hampshire (1965: 96) when he writes that Austin's "arguments [. . .] were almost always *ad hominem* arguments."
80. See Arrington (1975) for an example.
81. Urmson (1965: 80f).

he himself never mentions an ultimate goal. While Urmson's account of the first and the second stage can be matched with Austin's own explanations, the account of the third stage cannot. Austin, to be sure, time and again uses the rhetoric of an aspiring explorer who aims at bringing his subject matters to final clarification. But it is hard to overlook the irony in this and often they rather underline Austin's general "scepticism about philosophical analysis".[82] And even if we adopt the idea that all the countless uses of language could in the long run be collected like "species of beetle,"[83] this would only confirm that the description of ordinary language is virtually endless. Thus, it seems more plausible to assume that the 'third stage' figured as a vanishing point in Austin's method, the main function of which was to make one aware that theorising is *not* allowed at the first and second stages.

Whatever his intentions really were, it is evident that Austin invested all his energies into perfecting his method, not in theory building. This is why it might be off the point to lament that Oxford philosophy, while enjoyable, did not produce a proper output that could document its philosophical quality or that Austin had no success in applying his method to philosophy proper.[84] Austin himself is said to have regarded his method "his most important contribution" to philosophy.[85] This might imply that he did not *aim* at any theory that becomes manifest in books and articles.

In this connection, a *fourth* and final point can be made. A philosophical method or practice can have goals other than theory building. It may not lead to an external output but it can still contribute to cultivating the mind. In fact, the *educational* spirit of Austin's teaching can be substantiated. Hampshire reports that Austin apparently did not really distinguish between philosophy and the "teaching of philosophy," that he "very strongly believed in the educational value of philosophy" and "sometimes seemed to subordinate philosophy itself to education".[86] The idea that philosophy is all about character formation – *paideia*, as the Greeks called it – would certainly not have been at all peculiar for a classicist. Perhaps we should not overlook that the very passage that introduces the label 'linguistic phenomenology' also mentions the aim to "sharpen our perception". Since it has to be expected that the sharpening of one's perception goes along with a transformation of one's whole person this might confirm that the method was designed to transform

---

82. Hampshire (1965: 91).
83. Austin (1956b: 234).
84. See Berlin (1973: 16) for the former and Chisholm (1963: 101) for the latter.
85. Urmson (1965: 77).
86. Hampshire (1960: 41f).

the mind. For Austin, this theme would have been familiar from Aristotle. And when he read in Merleau-Ponty that philosophy is about "learning to see the world anew,"[87] he would have had little difficulties in accepting this idea.

Department of Philosophy
University of Hildesheim
Universitätsplatz 1
31141 Hildesheim
Germany
leeten@uni-hildesheim.de

References

Arrington R. L. (1975). "Can there be a linguistic phenomenology?" *The Philosophical Quarterly* 25: 289–304.

Austin J. L. (1939). "Are There *A Priori* Concepts?" In J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1979, pp. 32–54.

——— (1940). "The Meaning of a Word." In J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1979, pp. 55–75.

——— (1956). "A Plea for Excuses." In J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1979, pp. 175–204.

——— (1956b). "Performative Utterances." In J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1979, pp. 233–252.

——— (1958). "Three Ways of Spilling Ink." In J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1979, pp. 272–287.

——— (1962). *How to do Things with Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

——— (1967). "ἀγαθόν and εὐδαιμονία in the *Ethics* of Aristotle." In J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1979, pp. 1–31.

——— (1979). "The Line and the Cave in Plato's *Republic*." In J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1979, pp. 288–303.

Berlin I. (1973). "Austin and the Early Beginnings of Oxford Philosophy." In I. Berlin (ed.), *Essays on J.L. Austin*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 1–16.

Cahiers de Royaumont (1962). *La Philosophie Analytique* (Cahiers de Royaumont IV). Paris: Les éditions du Minuit.

---

87. Merleau-Ponty (1945: 21).

Cavell S. (1962). "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy". In S. Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say?* New York: Cambridge University Press 2002, pp. 44–72.

——— (1964). "Must We Mean What We Say?" In S. Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say?*. New York: Cambridge University Press 2002, pp. 1–43.

——— (1965). "Austin at Criticism". In S. Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say?* New York: Cambridge University Press 2002, pp. 97–114.

Cerf W. (1966). "Critical Review of How To Do Things With Words". In K. T. Fann (ed.), *Symposium on J.L. Austin*. London and New York: Routledge and Kegan 1969, pp. 351–379.

Chase J. and J. Reynolds (2017). "Russell, Ryle and Phenomenology. An Alternative Parsing of the Ways". In A. Preston (ed.), *Analytic Philosophy. An Interpretative History*. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 52–69.

Chisholm R. M. (1963). "Austin's Philosophical Papers". In K. T. Fann (ed.), *Symposium on J.L. Austin*. London and New York: Routledge and Kegan 1969, pp. 101–126.

Dummett M. (1993). *Origins of Analytic Philosophy*. London and New York: Bloomsbury 2014.

Durfee H. A. (1971). "Austin and Phenomenology." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 2: 23–25.

Egan D. et al. (2013). *Wittgenstein and Heidegger.* New York and London: Routledge.

Egan D. (2019). *The Pursuit of an Authentic Philosophy: Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and the Everyday.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gill J. (1973). "Linguistic Phenomenology." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 13: 535–550.

Guerrière D. (1979). "Table of Contents of 'Phenomenology of Perception'. Translation and Pagination." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 10: 65–69.

Gustafsson M. and R. Sørli (2012). *The Philosophy of J.L. Austin.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hampshire S. (1960). "J.L. Austin, 1911–1960". In K. T. Fann (ed.), *Symposium on J.L. Austin*. London and New York: Routledge and Kegan 1969, pp. 33–48.

——— (1965). "A Symposium on Austin's Method (III)". In K. T. Fann (ed.), *Symposium on J.L. Austin*. London and New York: Routledge and Kegan 1969, pp. 90–97.

Harris J. F. (1976). "A New Look at Austin's Linguistic Phenomenology." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 36: 384–390.

Manser A. (1975). "Austin's 'Linguistic Phenomenology'." In E. Pivčević (ed.), *Phenomenology and Philosophical Understanding*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 109–124.

Merleau-Ponty M. (1945). *Phénoménologie de la Perception*. Paris: Gallimard 2005.

——— (1945). *Phenomenology of Perception (translation by Donald A. Landes)*. London and New York: Routledge 2012.

——— (1956). "What is Phenomenology?" (translation by J.F. Bannan). *Cross Currents*. 6: 59–70.

Meyn H. L. (1972). "Durfee on Austin and Phenomenology." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 3: 286–287.

Noble S. A. (2019). "The Meanders of French Thought into the Anglophone World: Merleau-Ponty's *La Structure du comportement* and its English Translation." *Palimpsestes. Revue de Traduction* 33: 103–119.

Norris C. (1983). "'That the Truest Philosophy is the Most Feigning'. Austin on the Margins of Literature." In C. Norris, *The Deconstructive Turn. Essays in the Rhetoric of Philosophy*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 59–84.

Pitcher G. (1973). "Austin: a Personal Memoir." In I. Berlin (ed.), *Essays on J.L. Austin*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 17–30.

Quine W. V. O. (1965). "A Symposium on Austin's Method (II)". In K. T. Fann (ed.), *Symposium on J.L. Austin*. London and New York: Routledge and Kegan 1969, pp. 86–90.

Ryle G. (1928). "Heidegger's 'Sein Und Zeit'". In G. Ryle, *Critical Essays. Vol. 1*. London and New York: Routledge 2009, pp. 205–222.

——— (1932). "Phenomenology". In G. Ryle, *Critical Essays. Vol. 1*. London and New York: Routledge 2009, pp. 174–185.

——— (1962). "Phenomenology versus 'The Concept of Mind'". In G. Ryle, *Critical Essays. Vol. 1*. London and New York: Routledge 2009, pp. 186–204.

Taylor C. (1964). "*La Philosophie Analytique* (Review)." *The Philosophical Review* 73: 132–135.

Taylor C. and A. J. Ayer (1959). "Phenomenology and Linguistic Analysis." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary 22: 93–124.

Urmson J. O. (1965). "A Symposium on Austin's Method (I)". In K. T. Fann (ed.), *Symposium on J.L. Austin*. London and New York: Routledge and Kegan 1969, pp. 76–86.

Urmson J. O. and G. J. Warnock (1969). "Foreword to the Second Edition". In J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1979, pp. v–vii.

Warnock G. J. (1963). "John Langshaw Austin. A Biographical Sketch". In K. T. Fann (ed.), *Symposium on J.L. Austin*. London and New York: Routledge and Kegan 1969, pp. 3–21.

——— (1973). "Saturday Mornings." In I. Berlin (ed.), *Essays on J.L. Austin*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 31–45.

Wittgenstein L. (1953). *Philosophical Investigations*. Malden and Oxford: Wiley Blackwell 2009.