

PRETENDING.

PROFESSOR J. L. AUSTIN AND MISS G. E. M. ANSCOMBE.

I.—By J. L. AUSTIN.

In a recent paper¹ Mr. Errol Bedford argues that "anger", like other words which would be said to be words for emotions, is not the name of a feeling, despite the existence of such expressions as "feeling angry". "Anger", he argues, is not a name, nor is anger a feeling: there is no specific feeling that angry men as such feel, nor do we, to be angry, have to feel any feeling at all. With this thesis I am not concerned, but only with some remarks that he makes, quite incidentally, about pretending (and I realise it is hard on him to pick these out for intensive criticism). For he thinks that his view may be countered by referring to the case of someone *pretending* to be angry: is this not parallel to the case of someone *pretending* to be in pain, who precisely does not feel a certain feeling (pain) that the man who *is* in pain *does* feel—a feeling of which "pain" surely is the name?

"Can we say that being angry is similar to being in pain in this respect? Let us contrast the cases of a man who is angry and another, behaving in a similar way, who is only pretending to be. Now it may well be true that the former feels angry, whereas the latter does not, but in any case it is not this that constitutes the difference between the fact that the one is angry and the fact that the other is only pretending to be. The objection rests on a misconception of what pretence is. There is necessarily involved in pretence, or shamming, the notion of a limit which must not be overstepped: pretence is always insulated, as it were, from reality. Admittedly this limit may be vague, but it must exist. It is a not unimportant point that it is usually *obvious* when someone is pretending. If a man who is behaving as if he were angry goes so far as to smash the furniture or commit an assault, he has passed the limit; he

¹ *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1956/57.

is not *pretending*, and it is useless for him to protest afterwards that he did not feel angry. Far from this statement being *proof* that he was not angry, it would be discounted even if it were accepted as true. 'He was angry, but he did not feel angry' is not self-contradictory, although it is no doubt normally false. If in a particular case it is difficult—as it may be—to settle the question 'Pretended or real?' that can only be because the relevant public evidence is inadequate to settle it. What we want is more evidence of the same kind, not a special piece of evidence of a different kind. Our difficulty in resolving the question 'Is he really in pain?' on the other hand, arises from the fact that the only decisive evidence is evidence that he alone is in a position to give."

Since pain gets a perhaps undue share of attention in philosophy, and since Mr. Bedford is not shocking us about pretending to be in pain, let us here leave pain out of it, only remarking that if pretending to be in pain and pretending to be angry are actually as different as Mr. Bedford supposes then surely his statements about pretending, designed as they are to fit the case of anger, should be put in less general terms.

Our man, then, is "behaving as if he were angry". He scowls, let us say, and stamps his foot on the carpet. So far we may (or perhaps must?) still say "He is not (really) angry: he is (only) pretending to be angry." But now he goes further, let us say he bites the carpet: and we will picture the scene with sympathy,—the carpet innocent, the bite untentative and vicious, the damage grave. Now he has gone too far, overstepped the limit between pretence and reality, and we cannot any longer say "He is pretending to be angry" but must say "He is really angry." Mr. Bedford's language seems to me on the whole to mean positively that we must say this *because and in the sense that* behaviour of this extreme sort *constitutes* being really angry,²

² At least the bite "constitutes the difference" between being really angry and pretending to be angry, the common element being presumably such behaviour as scowling. Some may recall the textbook example, where it's only the hair on a gooseberry that stops it from being a grape: by a "gooseberry", then, we mean simply a hirsute grape,—and by a "grape" likewise simply a glabrous gooseberry.

or is just what we mean by "being really angry". If, however, he only means, what he also says, that the extreme behaviour is decisive *evidence* that the man is really angry, that is not only a very different and slightly (if only slightly) more plausible thesis, but also one too weak to serve for his argument: for now we are still not told what really being angry, for which this is only the *evidence*, is, nor therefore shown that it does not involve, or even reside in, the feeling of a feeling,—the evidence *might* be evidence that he is feeling a certain feeling.

We have primarily to consider whether Mr. Bedford is right in what he says we should *say*, rather than his claims about what is shown by our so speaking, if we do. If the man takes the bite, he *can't* 'be pretending',—here surely Mr. Bedford carries the philosopher's professional addiction to furniture to a new pitch of positive concern for it. And if he does really mean that the difference in behaviour "constitutes the difference between the fact that the one is angry and the fact that the other is only pretending to be", then he must be claiming, not only that once he has taken the bite we *cannot* (truly) say "He is only pretending to be angry", which seems false, but also that if he merely stamps and goes no further we *cannot* (truly) say "He is really angry", which seems patently false. I think it must on reflexion be agreed that in whichever of the ways the man behaves it is open to us to say *either* "He is angry" *or* "He is only pretending to be angry", and that either statement can be in fact true, depending on the (other) circumstancea of the case at least in addition to these features of his behaviour. It is common enough for someone who is really angry to behave in no way violently or even conspicuously: and if someone is pretending to be angry in some emergency where the success of the pretence matters seriously, more anyway than the integrity of any adjacent furniture (which may not even be his own and may in any case be insured), then surely he may hit upon biting the carpet as the very thing to clinch the deception.

Something has gone very wrong. Yet still there are in fact, as we should expect, ways in which limits and the

overstepping of limits are relevant to the concept of pretending, as to so many others. On a festive occasion you are ordered, for a forfeit, to pretend to be a hyaena: going down on all fours, you make a few essays at hideous laughter and finally bite my calf, taking, with a touch of realism possibly exceeding your hopes, a fair-sized piece right out of it. Beyond question you have gone too far.³ Try to plead that you were only pretending, and I shall advert forcibly to the state of my calf,—not much pretence about that, is there? There are limits, old sport. This sort of thing in these circumstances will not pass as “(only) pretending to be a hyaena”. True,—but then neither will it pass as *really being* a hyaena. The limit overstepped, a limitation upon violence as in the carpet-biting case, is not a boundary between pretending to be a hyaena and really being a hyaena, but between pretending to be a hyaena and behaving like an uncivilized tough, or perhaps between *merely* pretending to be a hyaena and pretending to be a hyaena *with a difference* of some kind, with knobs on or with ulterior motives. So too if you begin to assault the bric-a-brac when told to pretend to be angry for a forfeit, we need not say that you must be really angry, but only that such antics are too bad and quite uncalled-for when pretending in such circumstances, or perhaps that you are taking advantage of the opportunity to further private aesthetic aims (in which case you may not really be pretending, but only pretending to pretend), or perhaps something else again quite different but still in its way satisfyingly censorious.

The moral is, clearly, that to be not pretending to be, and still more to be not only-pretending to be, is not by any means necessarily, still less *eo ipso*, to be really being. This is so even when the way in which we fail to be (only-) pretending is by indulging in excessively “realistic” behaviour: but of course there are also numerous other kinds of case, some to be mentioned later, in which we might be taken to be pretending and so may be said to be not pretending, where the reasons for which we are said not to be (only-) pretending are totally different from this, and

³ In these circumstances. But if Nero ordered you, in the arena, to pretend to be a hyaena, it might be unwisely perfunctory *not* to take a piece right out.

such that the notion that not-pretending \supset really being could scarcely insinuate itself. We must not allow ourselves to be too much obsessed by the opposition, in which of course there is *something*, between pretending and really being: not one of the following formulae is actually correct:—

- (1) not really being \supset pretending
- (2) pretending \supset not really being
- (3) not pretending \supset really being
- (4) really being \supset not pretending.⁴

So set out these formulae loose, I realise, some of their attractiveness: but arguments like Mr. Bedford's show that they can attract; he has actually, if I am not mistaken, fallen principally for (3), which is not by any means the most tempting, though some of his arguments seem to favour (2), a quite independent matter.

"Pretend" is a verb used in various constructions, of which I have so far only mentioned "pretend to be" followed by an adjective or adjectival phrase or by a substantive with the article: in such cases excessive behaviour will, as we have seen, commonly not produce the result that the performer "really is", *e.g.*, angry. (I hesitate to say it, but surely the obvious reason is that "being angry" does not consist merely in behaving publicly in some manner: to say this need not commit us to saying that being angry is the same as feeling angry,—it is not, any more than being tired is the same as feeling tired,—still less that "anger" is the name of a feeling.) However, we have to consider also the construction in which "pretend" is followed by "to A" or "to be A-ing", especially in cases where the verb "A" is one which describes the doing of some *deed* (*e.g.*, "bite" as opposed to *e.g.*, "believe"), and more particularly when that deed is of a pretty "physical" kind (*e.g.*, biting as opposed to *e.g.*, giving). If we now consider such a case as this: and if we remember one of the conditions that must be satisfied whenever I am pretending, *viz.*, that there must be something, and something public, that I am actually doing,

⁴ Actually, 'really' is, like 'actually', really a broken reed in philosophy. See how they twist and turn in example (3) below—the window-cleaner.

some action I actually am performing, in pretending and in order to pretend: then we may hope to have found *one* type of case in which what Mr. Bedford claims to hold of pretending in general does in fact hold.

Let us take the case where someone is to "pretend to take a bite out of your calf". Here it would be agreed that one thing he must *not* do,⁵ however lifelike the pretence, is anything that could be correctly described as "(actually) taking a bite out of your calf": yet plainly too the action he has, in pretending, actually to perform is one which will be up to a point genuinely like the action he is pretending to perform (for what he is pretending is *here* to perform a public physical action), and might, but for precautions, pass over into it.⁶ If he goes far enough he *will* have *really* done the thing he was only to pretend to do: and if he does not go so far, he *cannot* have really done *that* thing. Here, then, we seem to have a case on Mr. Bedford's pattern.

It is owing to the special features of cases of this kind that an impasse can arise over pretending to do something, say hole a putt, in circumstances, say in the presence of a surrounding crowd, where there seems to be nothing one can do at all like holing the putt which will not result in the putt's being actually holed.⁷ It is easy to pretend to be sitting on a certain chair when it is half concealed behind a desk, less easy if it is in full view. (This is different from the less subtle type of case where one cannot pretend to do something because one can do neither it nor, often by the same token, anything even passably like it. Thus you cannot pretend to curl your trunk,—though again, of course, if you help yourself to that curious object "a pretend trunk", *i.e.*, something of which we *pretend that* it is your trunk, you can very likely curl that, and hence also very likely pretend to curl it.)

⁵ At least intentionally: I neglect complications about the unintentional.

⁶ Of course there is too the rarish and quite different case in which a man pretending to be angry actually *becomes* angry—makes himself angry. I do not think this is of comparable interest.

⁷ Doubtful, though not inexplicable, cases arise here, because of doubts ^a to how much is connoted by a putative description of a "physical" action. Can I pretend to cough? Shall I, if I produce a coughing noise, have actually coughed? Or is "to cough" different from "to deliberately cough"?

Is it however the case that at least when we are pretending to do or to be doing a physical action we are *universally* debarred from actually doing that action itself? We will consider three examples:

(1) Two miscreants are surprised in the act and hastily agree, the wherewithal being handy, to pretend to be sawing a tree: in a trice the blade is humming to and fro a bare inch away from the bark. How good a pretence is that? And wouldn't they any longer be pretending to be sawing the tree if they allowed the teeth to bite in? Surely if they want the pretence to be convincing they should set about actually sawing the tree?

(2) Yet surely again magicians pretend to saw girls, we've all seen one pretending very successfully to saw a girl in half. Would it really be still a pretence, and a more convincing one, if the teeth were biting in? Or wouldn't it rather have been transformed into grim reality?

(3) That chap over there, he's all right I suppose, he's cleaning the windows, eh?

Ah, *him*, he's *pretending* to be cleaning the windows right enough, cleaning 'em a treat too: but I seen him taking note of the valuables through 'em all the time.⁸

To unravel these examples, we shall need a few more lemmas: we shall need to bring out more of the full features of the situation when we are pretending, which is moderately complicated. And first for that goddess fair and free (fairly fair, frailly free), divinest Etymology. *Prae-tendere* in Latin never strays far from the literal meaning of holding or stretching one thing in front of another in order to protect or conceal or disguise it: even in such a figurative use as that in Ovid's "*praetendens culpa splendida verba tuae*", the words are still a *façade* to hide the crime. In

⁸ Here is another, trick, example, for exercise purposes only:—a man at a party decides, in an attempt to amuse, to pretend to behave vulgarly: the party, however, is of a type at which even to pretend to behave vulgarly is, alas, to behave vulgarly.

English, we do not any longer explicitly refer, in the construction used with "pretend", to that which the pretender is hiding or dissembling, which in Latin does appear in the dative case.⁹ Nevertheless it seems clear that it still is an important feature of pretending, in classic cases if not in all, that the pretender is concealing or suppressing something.

In a case of pretending, then, there will typically be:

(PB) The pretence-behaviour, the actual public performance gone through in pretending, indulged in, as of course it is, for the sake of dissembling.

(Rd) The reality-dissembled, about which the audience is to be hoodwinked. This *may* on occasion include in part, or be wholly identical with

(RBd) Some real-behaviour-dissembled, as for instance when I am really engaged in biting the carpet but disguise this fact by pretending to be kissing it.

Thus when we speak of someone's angry behaviour being only a pretence, *one* thing with which this pretended anger is commonly being contrasted at least in our minds is (Rd) his real emotion, feeling, attitude, or what you will, which, whatever it is, is precisely not "real anger". In daily life, indeed, this contrast may be of more interest than the quite different contrast, which has been more stressed by philosophers, between

(PBm) The mere-pretence-behaviour, the actual public performance gone through in pretending, dis-regarding its motivation,

and

(GBs) The genuine-behaviour-simulated, which PBm is intended to resemble. This may be related to a further

⁹ Indeed in English even the accusative case after "pretend", as in *e.g.*, "He pretended sickness", though a venerable construction is by now archaic. In the special construction 'pretending not to be' there is however a reference to what is being concealed.

(Gs) "Genuinity"¹⁰-simulated, as genuinely behaving angrily is related, for example, to genuinely being angry.

When some simple contrast between "pretence" and "reality" comes up in discussion, it is all too often uncertain which of the things here listed is being contrasted with which.

To return now to our three examples. (2)—the girl-sawing—simply supports the rule suggested by the preceding discussion, that in pretending to do A you must not actually do A, or that PBm must not coincide with GBs. Defending this rule, we are tempted to try some special dodge to get out of (1)—the tree-sawing. The miscreants are "pretending to be sawing the tree" and also "they are sawing it" in fact, *but* perhaps they are pretending to "be sawing" it in a sense that covers times earlier and later than the time during which they "are sawing" it in fact: so that PBm does differ from GBs, it extends over a shorter stretch of time. Or perhaps we should not allow that they "are (seriously) sawing" it, *e.g.*, in the sense that they are not embarked on an operation designed to terminate in the fall of the tree: but it is not clear what this means,—suppose the police are suspicious and continue to hang around indefinitely? The case will then become like that of the man who pretends to be playing golf by playing a few strokes: can he prolong the pretence all round the course and yet not be actually playing golf? It is likely that by introducing "seriously" (and of course it is true that their heart is not in sawing the tree, they are only doing it at all to cover up something) we are really already on the way to the treatment which we *must* use for example (3)—the window-cleaner.

Here surely no dodge will help us; we must allow that he is indeed actually cleaning the windows, from start to finish

¹⁰ I am driven to this horrible word because I wish to use throughout the second contrast a different term from "real", which I have kept for the first contrast.

The Gs may stand to the GBs as, say, its "motivation": then such an expression as "pretending to be angry" will commonly run the two together. But where the GBs is something more purely "physical", such as "sawing a girl in half", the Gs, if any, is at a discount.

and throughout the whole time he is pretending to be cleaning them. But it is still a pretence, because what he's *really* doing all the time is something different, namely noting the valuables: he is only cleaning the windows to disguise and promote this other activity,—RBd goes on during the course of PB, which facilitates it and distracts attention from it. (In other cases RBd may actually be incorporated into PB as a camouflaged part of it.) It looks, then, as though it does not matter if PB does coincide with GBs, so long as the contrast between PB and RBd is preserved.¹¹

It is worth noting once more that it will seldom be possible to decide with certainty that PBm does coincide exactly with GBs, because in so many cases GBs is apt to be described, and may only be describable, in terms which already import the Gs which underlines it: thus when someone is "pretending to be angry", the GBs will be "angry behaviour" or "the behaviour of an angry man", a description which may be held already to mean that the actions are done "in anger". Only when the GBs is describable in pretty purely "physical" terms which disregard "motivation" and the like, *e.g.*, as "sawing a girl", shall we be confident of the coincidence.

In the light of example (3), it can now be seen that the supposed rule that in certain cases, such as example (2), PBm must not coincide with GBs, is really only a marginal case of a more general rule. The essence of the situation in pretending is (not so much that my public behaviour must be non-genuine behaviour, as rather) that my public behaviour is meant to disguise some reality, often some real behaviour. From this it obviously follows, not only that PB must not coincide with RBd, in which case there would be no disguise, but also that PB must not coincide with *not*-RBd, in which case there would be nothing to be being disguised. Now in a case like that of the magician, the RBd precisely is, or includes, *not* actually sawing the girl in half, so that the GBs, sawing the girl in half, is equivalent to *not*-RBd: hence in such a case it follows directly from the

¹¹ Here is one of the similarities between "pretence" and "pretext". A pretext may be not a genuine reason or not your real reason: a pretence may be something you're not genuinely doing or not what you're really doing.

more general rule that PB must stop short of being identical with GBs, as = not-RBd. This type of case, where Gs precisely equals or involves not-Rd, or GBs not-RBd, is of course quite a common one: 'pretending not be' is a special variety of it.

At least in many cases there seems to be a clear difference in meaning between the expressions "pretending to A" and "pretending to be A-ing". The former seems often to be preferred where it is being pointed out that PBm does not coincide with GBs, while the latter stresses that PB does not coincide with RBd. "He is only pretending to clean the windows", *i.e.*, what he is doing doesn't amount to genuinely cleaning the windows: but "He is only pretending to be cleaning the windows", *i.e.*, what he is really up to is something other than cleaning the windows. Take, again, Potter's gambit, where he makes three random moves and then resigns. If we say "He's only pretending to play (chess)", we mean that that is not playing chess:¹² but if we say "He's only pretending to be playing (chess)", we allow that in a way and for all we care he is playing chess, but we mean that he's really up to some deeper game. Children who are ignorant may typically be "pretending to play chess": children, ignorant or not, who are up to mischief may typically be "pretending to be playing chess". The magician who is pretending to saw the girl, *i.e.*, we reassure ourselves, not actually sawing her, may also be said to be "pretending to be sawing her" if, whether he is or not (and naturally we presume not), he is surreptitiously engaged in something else rather crucial for the success of the illusion.

I should not, however, like to claim that this is the whole story about "pretending to A" and "pretending to be A-ing". For consider two further cases:—

(4) Someone in the next room out of sight keeps up a string of remarks such as "Check", "Your move", *etc.*, and occasionally taps pieces of wood together. We should say "He is (only) pretending (for the benefit of us in the next room) to be playing chess", but scarcely

¹² For some reason. *E.g.*, to be genuinely playing chess you must be making your moves with the object of winning, or at least of not losing.

"He is (only) pretending to play chess." Why is this ?

(5) A boy in an armchair is making tugging and twisting movements with his arms, accompanied by gear-change and other raucous noises. He is "pretending to be driving a racing-car", but scarcely "pretending to drive a racing-car". Why ?

A *possible* answer is this. In neither case is the behaviour of the pretending party sufficiently like the genuine article (GBs) for it to be in point to mark the distinction between the two. To pretend to drive a racing-car, he would need a racing-car: as it is, there is no serious prospect of deception. And in case (4) the deception is worked indirectly, mainly by words: if his actual actions were observed, there would again be no serious chance of deception. It might be urged, too, that both these cases of "pretending to" have some affinity with "pretending that", of which more later, which generally requires the continuous present tense after it. On the other hand, the difference between, say, "pretending to sit" and "pretending to be sitting" is at least sometimes clearly just the familiar difference between "he sits" and "he is sitting", so that it will not do to claim that the two forms of expression are used to mark any one single distinction.

So far we have not strayed very far from our starting point, a consideration of the limits which must not be overstepped in the pretence-behaviour. Only in special cases is the limit between "pretending to do A" and "really doing A" of much interest, and even then it is of minor importance in clarifying the whole notion of pretending. When something claimed to be pretending is ruled out by reason of "going too far", this will commonly mean something such as "going beyond what was socially permissible on that occasion" rather than "slipping into doing the actual thing". But now further, there are other conditions of a quite general kind to which behaviour must conform if it is to qualify as pretence-behaviour: the following examples may serve to bring out some of them:—

(6) Trapped on a branch against the moon, we decide to pretend to be owls: you give a colourable

hoot while I pull up my legs and hunch my shoulders up to my ears.

(7) As I am engaged in filching one of your goats, you return inopportunately through the dusk: with a baffled snarl I bound off into the adjacent bush. Was this "pretending to be a panther"? Or what if instead I slink about the kraal with menacing grunts?

(8) Told to pretend to be a hyaena at a party, you recline and appear to sleep.

(9) In similar circumstances, you proceed to jump around powerfully on your hind legs, boxing with your fists and fondling something in your pocket.

These are all somewhat facetious cases of "pretending to be an" animal. It may be worth pointing out that "pretending to be a hyaena" in the let's-pretend, make-believe, party-forfeit way, is a very recent usage, perhaps no older than Lewis Carroll, and the same indeed seems to apply to at least most usages in which we pretend to be something other than ourselves. One of the most conspicuous facts in the history of the word "pretend" is that of late it has come to be more popular and to be applied more widely than formerly.

In (6) I do better than you. We both *imitate* the owl, you perhaps rather better in voice than I in silhouette: but you stop short of pretending to be an owl, because you fail to attempt to disguise the fact that you are not one,—mere imitation does not imply dissembling anything. In (7), while it seems clear that I am pretending if I slink around, this becomes much more doubtful if I bound away, *right* away and *promptly*: for it to be a clear case of pretending I, my human person, must *remain on the scene* to be hidden under the pretence, but as things are it is plainly preferring to be hidden under the bush. If, to startle me, you quack in a passable way from the undergrowth, you are scarcely pretending to be a duck (for you are not on the scene nor in need of disguise), as you would however be, very probably, if I trod on you in the dark and you quacked. Of course in all these cases you might be trying to *make me believe* that you were a panther or a duck: but not all such deceptions are

achieved by pretending,—I can make you believe I am angry by many methods without ever pretending to be angry.

In case (7), at the party, there is of course no question of my trying to convince you *seriously* that I am something other than myself; but still, on the party level, my performance must be convincing, I must dissemble my humanity under a simulated hyaenity. I contrive to fail on both counts at once, because my behaviour is as much human as hyaenine,—how then could it distract attention from my humanity, to which so many other things point, or prompt anyone even to think specially of hyaenas? A pretence must be not merely like but *distinctively* like the genuine article simulated: you will hardly pretend to be angry by simulating the behaviour of an angry man in perfect control of himself (though of course it might help if you were to say “I am angry” too).

In (7), you evidently have a wrong idea of what a hyaena is. The puzzle, such as it is, is exactly parallel to that about the man who, trying to draw a map of France, draws an outline which is that of Italy: its solution throws no special light on pretending, but rather on doing and intending to do in general,—for pretending to be doing something is of course as good a case as another of doing something. You are meaning or trying to pretend to be a hyaena, but actually behaving like a kangaroo: this is the correct and the shortest accurate way of describing the situation. There is *no* short answer to the question “Is he pretending to be a hyaena or isn’t he?” nor to “Is he pretending to be a hyaena or a kangaroo?” since such simple expressions are not adequate to cope with such a complicated case.

It is quite misleading to handle pretending in the way it is so often handled, as identical with being (or being doing) except that some special feature is left out,—and Mr. Bedford is no worse in this respect than those he is attacking, who say, *e.g.*, that pretending to be in pain is just the same as being in pain except that you don’t feel pain, or that pretending to be angry is behaving like a really angry man only without feeling like one. Even if there were, what there is not, a general bar against PBM being the same as

GBs, and even if it were possible, which even then it would not be, to give a *general* account of the precise way in which PBm must *always* fall short of GBs, still such an account would not explain pretending: for there are many situations in which I behave like an angry man without being really angry, which are nevertheless not cases of pretending. For example, I may be a rough diamond, or have odd manners, or be strangely insensitive, or not be attending to what I am doing: or I may be acting or rehearsing, or merely imitating or mimicking. And yet these are only some of the simplest things from which pretending has to be distinguished, much less near to it than, say affecting or shamming or feigning or posing as. To be pretending, in the basic case,¹³ I must be trying to make others believe, or to give them the impression, by means of a current personal performance in their presence, that I am (really, only, etc.) *abc*, in order to disguise the fact that I am really *xyz*. To neglect to notice all this is to put in the bathwater without the baby.

Even so, we are far from having a full account of the nuances of pretending. For example, in a pretence there is for preference an element of the extempore, and in the situation that prompts it an element of emergency,—there is at least something that has to be hidden. True, there are “elaborate” pretences: but if there is too much of this, with making-up and dressing-up like an actor rather than a mimic or a diseuse, we begin to prefer to speak of, say, impersonation or imposture or disguise. To pretend to be a bear is one thing, to roam the mountain valleys inside a bearskin rather another. True, there are prolonged pretences,—“How long,” the cry goes up from the eternal drawing-room “must we two go on pretending to one another?”—but still we prefer to say that Col. Barker posed for 20 years as a man rather than that she pretended for 20 years. Again, if there is no sort of urgency to hide what we elect to hide, we may prefer to speak of a leg-pull or of

¹³ I neglect here such parasitic cases as let's-pretending and pretending-to-oneself, besides, for the present, pretending-that. Still less have I space to take on “pretensions”, “the Old Pretender” and the like: but it is not too difficult in fact to fit all these into their appropriate niches in the concept, and sometimes they shed light, as, *e.g.*, the contrast between “affected” and “pretentious” may help to point the contrast between affecting and pretending.

affectation or a pose. Yet these are nuances, for it is probably legitimate enough, in these days, to extend "pretending" to cover most of these cases if we do not care for precision, just as we can use "pretended he was going to" to cover those cases where, more specifically, "he made a feint", *i.e.*, where he made a small movement in one direction to distract his opponent's defence, masking his true *intention*.

There remains, however, more to be said about one essential feature of pretending, namely that the pretender must be present and active in person to effect the deception by dint of his current behaviour. In the example of the panther above, the awkwardness is not merely that what is to be disguised is not "on the scene" to be disguised, but also that the pretender is not on the scene to do the disguising, features both essential to pretending though of course not essential to many other forms of deception. I may camouflage a factory as a housing estate, in order to deceive the enemy in an emergency, but this is not to pretend that it is a housing estate (still less does it pretend to be a housing estate). I may pretend to have been furious by emerging from the conference room breathing hard and making derogatory remarks about the proceedings: but not by leaving traces in the conference room,—bitten carpets, maybe,—designed to make you think I was furious at the time. In pretending, *contemporary behaviour* misleads as to *contemporary fact*, here the contemporary fact that I am not one recovering from or still suffering from the after-effects of fury, or mulling over fresh memories of fury.

This brings me to the last point I shall consider, the construction "pretending that". It may be the availability of this handy and flexible construction that has led to the ever increasing popularity of "pretend", since such neighbouring verbs in the family as "affect", "feign", "dissemble" and the like have never acquired a "that" construction. It may even seem that, equipped with a that-clause, pretending achieves emancipation from some of the limitations inherent in pretending-to: when pretending-to I can deceive only as to *my own* states or activities, and contemporary ones at that, but surely when I "pretend that

it was in the garage yesterday" I deceive as to something other than my own states or activities, and something non-contemporary at that.

However, it is not easy to be certain that there is in fact any systematic difference between pretending-to and pretending-that, let alone that just suggested.¹⁴ What is the difference between pretending to be on your way to Antarctica and pretending that you are on your way to Antarctica? Or between pretending not to remember her face and pretending that you do not remember it? One feels inclined to say: with pretending-that the stress is on the suppression or concealment of knowledge or memory or thought or belief or awareness, in short of some "cognitive state", and what is simulated is likewise some cognitive state.¹⁵ Thus to pretend that you're in love with her is to dissemble your awareness that you aren't, to pretend to be in love with her is to dissemble your indifference or aversion to her. Hence the fact, it might be argued, that in pretending-that the pretence-behaviour is particularly liable to take the form of verbal behaviour, since that is particularly apt for creating impressions about our cognitive states. Moreover the apparent emancipation of pretending-that can be on these lines both accounted for and discounted: when I pretend that it was in the garage yesterday I am still only dissembling *my own current* awareness (memory, knowledge, belief) that it was not: but of course awareness can be *awareness* of things other than my own states or activities, and of non-contemporary things.

Moreover it seems possible in this way to account for pretending-to-oneself or let's-pretending, the former of which strongly, if not exclusively, prefers the "that" construction. Here we have a sort of "make-believe",—we suppress our actual beliefs and simulate others.

Yet still in all cases of pretending-that, though it may be only a cognitive state that is simulated and though verbal devices maybe often employed, it remains true that there is

¹⁴ It might be relevant, but would take too long, to consider the other verbs ("hope", etc.) which can take both constructions: they are not particularly numerous.

¹⁵ Yet it seems scarcely right to say: "pretend that" = "pretend to believe (or the like) that".

an immediate connexion with non-verbal behaviour. Pretending that I'm on top of a mountain may seem a less active affair at first than pretending to be on top of a mountain, yet still it differs very considerably from merely imagining that I'm on top of a mountain: pretending—that is a preliminary to or even accompanied by behaviour such as inhaling deeply or pointing downwards (“Let’s pretend we’re giraffes and eat the leaves”), while imagining—that is a preliminary perhaps only to asking myself certain questions, —How should I feel? etc., while my public behaviour will scarcely go beyond a faraway look, which is certainly no part of the imagining. For this reason I can “always” imagine, e.g., that my prison walls are not there, but it may be “no good” pretending they aren’t there, they’re solid enough to stop me doing the things that follow on the pretending.

But how far can all this be pressed? Is pretending to be playing chess always so very different from pretending that you’re playing chess, or again (perhaps still more) from pretending you’re playing chess? Perhaps all that should be said is that the more it is a case of going through the motions the more likely we are to prefer “to be playing” or “to play”: while the less this is necessary and the more we can put the deception across by verbal means or by simulating a belief the more we shall prefer the “that” construction.

.

What, finally, is the importance of all this about pretending? I will answer this shortly, although I am not sure importance is important:¹⁶ truth is. In the first place, it does seem that philosophers, who are fond of invoking pretending, have exaggerated its scope and distorted its meaning. In the second place, in the long-term project of classifying and clarifying all possible ways and varieties of *not exactly doing things*, which has to be carried through if we are ever to understand properly what doing things is, the clarification of pretending, and the assignment to it of its proper place within the family of related concepts, must find some place, if only a humble one.

¹⁶ I dreamt a line that would make a motto for a sober philosophy: *Neither a be-all nor an end-all be.*

II.—PRETENDING.

By G. E. M. ANSCOMBE.

OFFERED 'pretending' as a philosophical topic, I should want to distinguish between mock performances and real pretences. The difference, so far as I have noticed, is not pointed to by any of those differences between the grammatical constructions respectively appropriate, sometimes to one nuance of sense and another, sometimes to one word and another closely related one, which are Professor Austin's favourite study. Hence he disregards it, and lumping dissimilar things together, finds that in "the basic case" the one who is pretending must be giving a "current personal performance" in someone's presence in order to disguise what he is really doing. Mock performances, to specimens of which he devotes a good deal of space, are most naturally exemplified in 'current personal performances' in the presence of others. But it is not at all characteristic of them to serve the purpose of disguising what the performer is really doing. That is a noteworthy characteristic of some real pretences. But for real pretences there is nothing specially basic about a 'current personal performance' in the presence of others. One can pretend to be angry in a letter (this might be mock anger or a real pretence) ; pretend to marry someone, the 'marriage' being by proxy ; pretend to be a meat-eater in a community where vegetarianism is criminally heterodox, by having conspicuous deliveries of butcher's meat made to one's house ; pretend through one's emissaries to come to an understanding with a foreign power. Whether the pretending has to be a personal performance sometimes, though not always, depends on whether the doing that is pretended has to be one. It demands a justification, which Professor Austin has not offered, to treat mock performances on the one hand, and

cases like these on the other, as deviations from a centre, as fringe cases in which some of the features of 'the basic case' have disappeared. He has perhaps formed this conception out of a prejudice that the identity of a phrase must have something which is 'the basic case' corresponding to it.

I can at present see little intrinsic interest in mock performances. Professor Austin tells us that part of the interest of his considerations is that "philosophers who are fond of invoking pretending have exaggerated its scope and distorted its meaning". In *The Concept of Mind* Professor Ryle discusses pretending, in the sense of giving a mock performance, when he prepares the ground for his attempt to explicate imagination as incipient or inhibited performance. That is a very strange account of imagination. I think it derives from the following suggestion of Wittgenstein's: suppose there were some people apparently playing tennis, but without any ball. Wittgenstein compared the mental image, or the calculation in the head, to this non-existent ball. We should notice that this is not the same thing as comparing *imagining* to the *mock performance* of playing tennis which is here envisaged. It is only the image which is being compared to the ball that there isn't in this game. (What would correspond to the players' strokes to and fro would be *e.g.* the overt setting of a sum and the overt production of the answer.)—I will not pretend to estimate the value of this suggestion, and only mention it to throw light on one of the ways in which 'pretending' has come into current philosophical literature. Obviously pretending is really quite irrelevant here. For though the tennis game without the ball could be called a mock game of tennis, and in that sense the players—in this highly fictitious example—could be said to be pretending to play tennis, the point of the example is not that this is a mock performance or any kind of pretence, but just that it is a tennis-game without a ball. And in Ryle's own attempt to describe imagination, what is of importance is the absence of something that is there when something is done, but not when it is done in imagination; it is not that such an absence

is *first* supposed to throw light on pretending, and this concept in its turn is *then* supposed to throw light on imagination, as if imagination were a species that fell under it.

Leaving mock performances aside, let us consider how 'really pretending' comes into current philosophical discussion. Professor Austin quotes an example, about pretending to be angry.

It is fairly easy to see that the connexion between the meanings of words like "pain" and "anger" and certain types of behaviour cannot be merely contingent. Just what the connexion is, however, is difficult to describe in some cases. *E.g.* it is certainly not that "He is angry" *means* "He behaves thus or thus". And yet acting a piece of typical angry behaviour might serve well as an ostensive definition of "anger". Here the inclination arises to think that if it does so serve, it is working as an indirect indication of something which is simple and yet cannot be indicated directly. This inclination arises because we remember about pretending. Let the following stand for the sort of behaviour that expresses anger :



A man may behave so and not be angry because he is pretending, and the person who understands the ostensive definition ought to understand this. Mr. Bedford, in the passage Professor Austin quotes, *may* be suggesting that the question whether the man who behaves so is pretending or really angry would necessarily be settleable if only there were 'more evidence of the same sort'. And by "more evidence of the same sort" he *may* mean "more (at least ostensibly) anger-expressing behaviour"—though if he got as far as putting it like that, he would surely *not* think so.

If, then, concentrating on 'behaviour that is (perhaps) expressive of real anger' and 'the anger that it is (perhaps)

expressive of', we think about pretending, we may feel forced back on a picture like this



where the dot behind the dashes stands for the anger itself. Then the dashes without the dot stand for the behaviour without the anger. This, if there is enough of it, will be pretended anger. We have to say "if there is enough of it" because *e.g.* a scowling face without anger, which looks like an angry face, may be, not a pretence of anger, but just the face someone has when he is thinking hard. But there is behaviour which certainly either is the mark of anger or is simulated anger.—Pursuing our picture, a plain dot without any dashes will be anger which a man does not express at all.

So, it is argued, someone who understands the ostensive definition of anger offered in an imitation of angry behaviour, will take it as an indirect indication of the dot—which cannot be directly indicated by one person to another at all. But with this conception we are forced back to the idea of the private ostensive definition with its absurd consequences—that for all we ever could know the word might stand for a different thing for different people or for the same person at different times; that we can never make more than a probable judgment that someone else is angry; or even that we cannot really make this judgment at all; that our own claim to be angry rests on an assumption that we have correctly identified something within ourselves—but without any standard of correctness—and so on.

This, then, is one great locus of the discussion of pretending. Professor Austin proposes to examine pretending just on its own account and out of the context of such discussions. In doing so he has convinced himself that a simple contrast between 'pretence' and 'reality' is no good; that pretending has such 'essential features' as

that the pretender must be present and active, and there must be something, also 'on the scene', that he is disguising; that there is such a thing as 'the essence of the situation in pretending', namely 'that my public behaviour must be being done in order to disguise some reality'.

Against this I would argue that pretending can no more have that type of 'essential feature' than falsehood or identity or seeming can. Seeming is especially relevant, because the notion of pretending is closely bound up with that of seeming. The best general account of pretending would be something like: *the production of a would-be seeming to be¹ what you are not*. That is clumsy, so I will shorten it to 'trying to appear what you are not': cases of this which would not fall under the longer form are excluded. The point of this exclusion is that a man might try to appear what he is not, and not succeed in doing anything—e.g., a very sick man, trying to seem cheerful and too weak even to smile, would have only tried to pretend.

From this general account of pretending we can see why the two more specious implications mentioned by Professor Austin do not hold. As he says, pretending does not imply not being, and really being does not imply not pretending. For e.g. a man can pretend to be poisoned when, unknown to him, he is poisoned. In "trying to appear what you are not" the words "what you are not" are governed by the "trying": the whole phrase does not mean: "concerning something which you in fact are not, trying to appear that thing", but: "trying to bring it about that, without being something, you appear that thing".

This general account of pretending needs an addition to include some cases of trying to make it seem that something is the case which is not. E.g., one might pretend that one's child was under three years old (to avoid paying a fare) by having him dressed in rather babyish clothes and carrying him like a rather younger child, as well as by what one said. All these details would be part of the pretence.

¹ Like Professor Austin, for brevity's sake I disregard other verbs than 'to be' in formulating this.

In such a case, we have to speak of 'pretending that' rather than 'pretending to' because the subject of what is pretended is not the same as the pretender, and not, I think, for any other reason. Two central features of "pretend" are (1) that the pretender should figure as a principal, in what is pretended *and* in that by which it is pretended; I mean the latter in such a sense that he would *be* a principal if the appearances were not deceptive. This condition may be satisfied even if he is not where the pretence is carried out, if what is done is something that could be done, with him as principal, without his presence, as in the case of the King coming to an agreement with a foreign power. My corollary (that he would be a principal in that *by* which the pretence was made, if the appearances were non-deceptive) can be seen to be necessary from this: if *e.g.*, the King arranged a deceptive appearance that his emissary proposed to murder him, he would not thereby be pretending to be a proposed victim of assassination. (2) Further, there is what might be called a 'rule of sequence of tenses' for "pretending"; if someone has broken some crockery and left it about so that I shall think he *was* angry, he *was* not pretending to be angry; and, unless he does something now to exhibit the smashed crockery as the result of past rage on his part, he *is* not now pretending *to have been* angry.—I suspect that these two facts have misled Professor Austin; he has misconstrued them as a necessity for the pretender to be 'present on the scene' and 'giving a current personal performance'.—Now in the pretence of the fraudulent traveller that the child is under three, the traveller is a principal. I will not consider such cases further; though one has to speak here of 'pretending that' and not 'pretending to', this is only because of the diversity of subjects, and such cases of 'pretending that' should be subsumed under 'pretending to'.

'Pretending' is an intention-dependent concept; one cannot pretend inadvertently. But no special further intentions in whatever constitutes pretending in a given case are specially basic "*as Professor Austin pretends*". Why would that be rude and unfair? Because it implies that

he has been trying to make-things-seem-as-they-are-not. There is no hint in that piece of rudeness that the publication of his paper serves to disguise something he is really up to, and it is not the absence of such a hint that turns it into a fringe use of "pretend".

'Seeming' can have no 'basic case'. Let A be the subject of a predicate x . Then we can ask "What is it for A to x , or to be x ?" and further "What is it for A (only) to seem to x or to be x ?" This latter enquiry may well throw light on the first question. And we *could* ask further "Can A be so responsible for phenomena by which he (only) *seems* to x , that it accords with the grammar of 'pretending' to say he pretends to x ?" In cases where that is so, an investigation of 'pretending to x ' will often help us to understand the concept ' x ' better. But the quite general characteristics of the verb "to pretend" are likely to give singularly little light in an enquiry into 'pretending to x '; such an enquiry must be completely dominated by the character of the ' x ' in question.

In the case in hand—that of pretending to be angry—if we consider when and why we may judge that someone was only pretending, we see that it is not only features of his ostensibly angry behaviour that prompt the judgment. If it were, then 'being angry' would be much more like *e.g.*, 'feeling jumpy' than it is. Pure pretences of being angry in person are rarely so successful that a discerning judge will not detect them in the tone and expression of the subject. However, such admirable pretences are possible; so of course the philosopher supposes a case where the performance is perfect. Then perhaps he feels driven either to such a recourse as Mr. Bedford's—"there is a limit that pretence must not overstep"—or to postulating something hidden behind the behaviour. But, as Professor Austin indicates without enlarging on it, there is more to look for besides giveaways in behaviour. Anger has four main features: (1) its object, (2) its expression, (3) feelings, (4) aims. By "angry behaviour" we usually mean things falling under (2), the expression of anger: the angry-looking face and gestures, the stamping or trembling or rigidity,

the tone of voice, perhaps the pointless smashing of things. (2) may include elements that bring in (1) and (4). If an angry man expresses his anger in speech, his speech will probably characterise the thing or person or situation or spectacle that he is angry with either as bad in some way, or possibly as something to be overcome or resisted. I suppose that is why Aristotle said that anger was more 'rational' than lust—the expression of anger by an angry man often gives *grounds* of anger. A story of anger—real or pretended—usually includes what the anger was at or supposed to be at, so characterised that the hearer can understand it *as* an occasion of anger. For example, if a man is said to have been angry at the sight of a chair, in a way we do not yet know what he was angry at; we need an explanation which will make it clear whether his purposes or orders have been frustrated, or his vanity insulted, or someone has been proved to have behaved abominably—or what.

There are also characteristic aims of anger—to harm or afflict someone or something, or to overcome obstacles² or resist or repel something. A man who was careful to give no sign of anger and did not even have specific angry feelings (sensible commotions) might be implacably angry and arrange some way of harming the man who angered

² I owe notice of this aspect of anger to Plato, made intelligible by Aquinas who adopted this part of Platonism, getting it apparently from St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. John of Damascus. He does not have a tripartite division of the soul like Plato, but divides the 'sensitive appetite' into two parts, the 'concupiscible' and the 'irascible.' Through the one, he says, the animal is simply inclined to pursue what it needs and to flee what is hurtful, through the other to resist what attacks its needs and offers hurt to it. "These two inclinations do not reduce to a single principle, because the animal sometimes faces hurt against the inclination of desire, so as to oppose what opposes it according to the inclination of anger. Hence the passions of the irascible are even seen to be at war with the passions of the concupiscible. For in general *as desire burns higher anger sinks, and as anger burns higher desire sinks.*" (*Summa Theologica*, Ia, Q.LXXXI, Art II.) To understand the force of this remark we should imagine someone, about to engage in sensual enjoyment, having to fight to retain what he wanted to enjoy; and then, the battle won, returning to engage in enjoyment.—But, Plato might say, anger is not uniquely concerned with sensitive appetite. That is because of our organisation: "while I was musing, a fire kindled". An abstruse thought can bring my fist crashing down on the table and so also cause all sorts of reverberations in my sensuality. Hobbes' definition of anger as "sudden courage" must be in this tradition.

him. Thus, though (2) may pass into (4), as when someone immediately starts strangling the person he is angry with, there *can* be a great difference between the expression of anger and its aims. A man could be said not to have given expression to his anger at all—he merely brought it about that the man who had offended him was ruined or hanged.

What is feeling angry? Let us suppose we find someone who has just been angry and ask him what he felt while he was angry. He may well say *e.g.*, “I felt hot”, “I felt cold and trembling”, “I felt a rush of blood to the head”, “I felt a slight tension in the chest”. Yet feeling angry is not any of these things; otherwise we could produce the sensations he characteristically has when angry—*e.g.*, by means of some electrical apparatus—and say: “There, now you feel angry”. On the other hand, those sensations were not just concomitants of his anger; he might feel something else, a pain in the stomach, let us say, while he was angry, and not mention it as ‘what he felt while he was angry’. The sensations that he mentions are the ones he—intuitively—gives as what he felt *in* being angry. Or again, we may say that he gives his anger as an interpretation of those sensations. But is there nothing else that the *felt* anger is? One kind of reply to this might be: “I felt: ‘You filthy swine!’ or ‘This is too much!’ or ‘That trick again!’” The words, or the thoughts, are themselves an angry reaction, and there is no need to postulate, indeed no sense in postulating, another reaction, not the words or the thought, which is the ground of the words or the thought and is the felt anger itself. The fact that the verbal reaction may be a sham does not prove such a need. The mistake is to suppose that since a man can say “I felt angry” we shall find out what anger is by finding out what he felt. In what context does he say “I felt angry”? In the context of some story of events, conversations, thoughts: that is to say, he puts the anger he reports into a context which shews a lot about the anger: and what it shews is not just extraneous. That is why looking for the meaning of “anger” in what a man feels who feels angry yields such

dissatisfying results, as if the anger itself had slipped between our fingers and we were left with details, which, while relevant, do not add up to anger.

I am not saying that every case of anger must have all these four features—rather, here we do have a ‘full-blown’ sort of case with all these features, and other cases lacking some of them. Now imagine an anthropologist saying “The psychology of this tribe is odd : they are angry only, and always, before sitting down to a really good meal.” Asked why he says so, he explains “Then, they always shake their fists and assume an expression of hideous rage ; after that, they sit down to eat ; and they never shake their fists or assume that expression at any other time.”—Would it not be absurd for someone so much as to say “They must be only *pretending* to be angry” ? Once we have recalled these points about anger, we can see how a diagnosis of pretence could be made in face of angry behaviour which was a quite flawless performance. For example, one might know that the man did not really mind about what he was ostensibly angry at ; that it really suited his book extremely well and that he knew this. Or that the supposed affliction that he was laying on the victims of his anger was not really an affliction at all but something agreeable and that he knew this.

If someone claims that he was only pretending to be angry on an intelligible occasion for anger and when his performance had been good if it was only pretence, it is natural to ask why he was pretending that ; and an answer telling more about the situation, his attitudes and what he was after will help to convince us that he was pretending.

These facts point to one great difference between anger and pain, and generally between passions and sensations. If a person’s performance is good and—as may be the case—there is nothing else to look at, there may be no way at all of telling whether his pain is sham or not, if, say, it is a brief pain or he does not make the mistake of behaving inappropriately when *e.g.*, he does not think he is observed. But it is absurd to say (as Mr. Bedford says in the passage quoted by Professor Austin ; which shocks me, though not

Professor Austin) that he alone is in a position to give decisive evidence! What he says is no more decisive than his behaviour is. If one thought his groans might be shamming pain, one would hardly accept his word. This however does not mean that there is quite generally a difficulty about knowing whether someone is in pain or not. The difficulty occurs in some cases; and sometimes cannot be resolved. Cases can be constructed for anger too; but there is much more to consider in cases of anger: the whole story of the occasion ('whole story' in the sense of "whole truth" in the law-court oath). Contrast "As I walked along the passage I had a sudden stab of pain in my chest," and "As I walked along the passage I had a sudden stab of anger." Anger what at? "Nothing at all." This man is talking nonsense—unless he means "At X, which I judge to be a nothing." On the other hand consider this case: an actor, who has to act an angry man in a play, says "When I act it, I really am angry." He backs this up by saying that he *feels* angry, and he *means* the angry words in which he recalls and threatens evils. Would not a dispute be stupid about whether he is correct to use the words "I really am angry" or not? 'Say which you like, so long as you are clear about the facts.' *This* situation does not arise for physical pain. For if an actor in *King Lear* said "It's a most extraordinary thing, when they tear out my eyes, I feel an agonizing pain as if it were really so, I almost think I shall have to give up the part," well, we believe him or not, there is not a choice, *after* we believe him, between saying "He really feels pain" and "He doesn't really".

Although I have given reasons for accepting Professor Austin's remark that pretending does not imply not really being and really being does not imply not pretending, I have the impression that his own reasons for saying this lie at least partly in his examples, such as that of the man who was cleaning the windows and at the same time 'pretending to be cleaning them'. Here he relies on a nuance which he explains to us. (It may not exist everywhere where English is native.) But the whole reason why a man can

be said to be pretending to be cleaning windows (when he also is cleaning them) is that what he is pretending is not the case. The explanation of the nuance makes this clear. The observer diagnoses the window-cleaner's felonious interest and guesses from this that the window-cleaning is a fake. The diagnosis might be right and the guess wrong—if, say, the man were the regular window-cleaner doing this regular job on his regular day. Professor Austin explains "It is still a pretence [*i.e.*, though the windows *are* being cleaned], because what he is *really* doing is something quite different." But the point of the expression "What he is *really* doing is something different" is that 'what he is *really* doing' falsifies the appearance he presents by cleaning the windows. There are other things he might also be 'really doing'—such as earning his wages or composing verse—which would also be 'different' from window-cleaning but which don't falsify "what he is really at is cleaning the windows" at all. The appearance presented by cleaning the windows is that, in cleaning the windows, he is doing something in some ordinary and proper course of things; and that this is a false appearance is the meaning of the expression "he is pretending to be cleaning the windows" in this context.

The two sentences

He is cleaning the windows

He is pretending to be cleaning the windows

may both be true; and as a matter of grammar "is cleaning" is the indicative corresponding to the infinitive "to be cleaning." Does Professor Austin think that *this* is therefore a counter-example to "pretending implies not really being"? And is it perhaps a fairly important step in his argument, enabling him to reject 'false appearance' as quite central to pretending? If so, this is grammatical superstition.

Why cannot a baby six months old pretend to be in pain? A mother might say "The baby pretends", and we "You mean there's nothing wrong, it only cries to be picked up." Suppose she insists that there is more to it, the baby is a clever one and *really* pretends? Mothers and

similar people talk nonsense of this sort. The question is how we know it is nonsense. It is not competence to perform a mental act of pretending that is in question. Wittgenstein would say "Pretending is part of a complicated form of life which the baby is not living yet", but what does that mean? English people are apt to say "The dog is pretending to be lame." Why? He limps, but if he sees a rabbit he rushes after it with no trace of a limp. He was lame and got a lot of special kindness, and is looking for more. We assimilate this behaviour to human pretending. Once these facts have been stated it is not a further hypothesis that he is pretending. The behaviour of the baby is not like enough for the assimilation to be attractive except to mothers, etc. But what is it not like enough to?

The answer to the questions raised here is that you cannot ascribe real pretence to anything unless you can ascribe to it (a) a purpose and (b) the idea 'can be got by seeming to—'. That is why the baby case is nonsense; the baby's purpose may be clear enough, but what reason could there be to ascribe to it more than the idea 'can be got by roaring'? And even this means no more than that the baby roars *to be picked up*. Then why should we say more of the dog than that he limps to be petted? Why indeed? Only because limping has such a characteristic appearance, is not just going on three legs but has an air about it, so that if the limping is voluntary, we may implicitly think of the presentation of this appearance as deliberate. We have once more reached a point where we should say "Say 'he's pretending' if you like, or refuse to if you like, so long as you are clear about the facts." I emphasize this; because I am not sure whether Professor Austin would ever admit that we ought to say "Say such-and-such if you like, so long as you are clear about the facts"; if he would have some objection to this, I should like to see it brought out into the open.

These considerations yield this result: we sometimes ascribe pretence by way of a comparison, a sympathetic projection on to a body of facts which we compare with

some of the facts of fairly developed human life. Apart from such sympathetic projections we must say: we can only ascribe pretence to beings to which we can also ascribe purposive calculation. That is not because pretence is generally purposive. It is not; wanting to seem something that one is not, without any further end in view, may even form the biggest part of pretending. But it must be significant that when we ascribe pretending to animals, it is because we see an advantage gained by seeming. Without meaning anything absurd (like the mother) we find it possible to speak of animals', birds' and insects' pretending to be boughs, leaves, twigs, etc. I think this shews reason to speak of purposive pretending as 'basic'.

When we consider unpurposive pretending, a new distinction appears between what I will call plain and non-plain pretending. Unpurposive pretence may be 'just for fun' or 'to tease' and the like. The description "unpurposive" may be challenged on the ground that teasing or fun is a purpose, but I think the challenge would be wrong. It is a specific advantage served by seeming that is characteristic of the purposive pretending that is 'basic'; fun and teasing are something one diagnoses as one diagnoses dancing or playing a game, not by seeing them as results achieved in a certain way.—I will call pretending "plain" when the pretender unreflectively knows that he is pretending. A great deal of unpurposive or only very vaguely and diffusely purposive pretending is non-plain.

What I have in mind is best illustrated by an example. Here is a dialogue between a schoolmaster and a parent summoned for interview :

Did James tell you I had to beat him to-day?

Yes, he said he got beaten.

Oh, did he tell you what it was for?

He told me it was for something he had written in his book.

Hm ! I don't suppose he told you what he had written.

I don't know—what he said was that he wrote "Casson is a sod." I gather Mr. Casson is one of the masters.

Oh ! . . . Well, that's not very nice, is it?

Well, I understand your beating him, but all the same, surely this is quite an ordinary thing for a boy to do?

No, in my experience, not at all normal.

Let the parent's reply to this be unspoken, since it is: "Stop pretending".

In this example, it might be tempting to call the schoolmaster's last remark a plain lie. But we ought to notice that most likely that is just what it is not. A lie is a plain lie when it contradicts what the speaker unreflectively thinks. I do not mean "when it contradicts an explicit thought" since (as is well known) 'what a man thinks' is not the same thing as 'what he *is at the moment thinking*'—even if it is only what he thinks for the time being, in the particular context. But sometimes it would take some reflection, in the circumstances, for a man to realise that he knew the contradictory of what he said. Then what he says is not a perfectly plain lie; he can even be said to think it.

It is not, however, his saying what he knows to be untrue that makes our schoolmaster's case one of (non-plain) pretending. He could pretend in this sense without saying anything untrue. Further, we often tell untruths that are not lies, in the sense that they do not contradict what we *unreflectively* know to be true, without 'pretending' in any sense beyond 'making out true what (we know) is not'; and, where the content of the 'pretence' is just the content of what is falsely said, there is no particular aptness about the word "pretending". We say a thing when we know it is not true, and yet without telling plain lies, in many ways; one is, by falling into cliché. For example, a sufficiently learned author speaks in a popular book of Hobbes' "militant atheism"; we are in a position to know that he knows that if Hobbes was an atheist he was a crypto-, not a militant, atheist. But the fact that he wrote that phrase shews that it would cost him a brief moment's recollection to realise that he knew this. Here, however, a use of the word "pretend" really would be a fringe use, as applied to a single statement; it would come to nothing but: "He says so-and-so, which he must know not to be

true.” But there is a sense in which the schoolmaster is pretending which goes beyond his telling a (non-plain) lie. What is in question here is *hypocrisy*: and we are trying to make out what kind of pretending this is.

The following example brings out the contrast between mock performance, plain pretence, and hypocritical pretence. A certain nun was the heroine of a devotionally exciting story; the story was generally known, but not her identity. Once someone guessed and said “So you are the one!” She, ‘with such simplicity’—so the story runs—‘that the other was completely deceived’, laughed and said “So you have found me out!” Thus she was pretending to be making a mock admission of something—with a view to concealing that it was the case. This, then, was a plain pretence. The word “simplicity” bears dwelling on. It does not merely mean that she laughed and spoke in a natural way, just like someone who really was making a mock admission of something that was not the case. Nor can it mean that she acted without guile, for the contrary is being recorded. With this word the story-teller is insisting that the pretence just was a genuine concealment of her identity, and not *itself* a further pretence of a new sort, as it were saying “See how I am one who wishes to remain obscure”. The story-teller probably wishes to suggest that the episode marked a genuine wish to remain obscure; not a pretence of having such a wish. *This* pretence, if the wanting-to-seem was just for its own sake, would be not plain but hypocritical pretence. It is characteristic of this sort of wanting-to-seem that it carries with it an implicit demand for respect for an atmosphere evoked by the pretender, which surrounds not the reality, but the *idea* of such things as being principled, or cultured, or saintly, or rich, or important. There is something of which the schoolmaster is as it were saying ‘Respect this’.

This throws light on a further notion, one of the popular senses of *cynicism*. In my sense of “plain”, this is a ‘plain’ pretence of hypocrisy, and is found, *e.g.*, among the clearer-headed politicians.