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Pretending and disbelieving

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ABSTRACT



I formulate and criticise a condition that captures some recent ideas on the nature of pretence, namely, the disbelief condition. According to an initial understanding of this condition, an agent who is pretending that P must also disbelieve that P. I criticise this idea by proposing a counterexample showing that an agent may be in a state of pretence that does not imply disbelief in what is pretended. I also draw some general conclusions about the nature of pretence.

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The general purpose of this essay is to contribute to our understanding of the concept of pretence. More specifically, I show that we may plausibly describe as pretence episodes certain states of affairs in which someone pretends by acting in the way she would if she believed the content of the pretence to be real. I take this point to imply that we ought to reject the claim that X's pretending that P implies that X disbelieves that P; that is, I question (versions of) what I call 'the disbelief condition' (DC). In short, I will argue that an agent need not disbelieve the content of her pretence.

In the first part of this paper, I discuss several definitions of pretence and various accounts of pretend play – my purpose being to introduce the theoretical tools that contemporary scholars in philosophy and psychology (mostly developmental psychology) have at their disposal to discuss pretence. In Section 2, I specify the critical target of my paper – the DC – in more detail, and propose a series of alleged counterexamples to it. I also suggest that one of them succeeds in showing that the DC is false. In Section 3, I discuss a series of objections to my arguments against the DC. In Section 4, I draw some additional conclusions from the discussion of my examples – for instance, I claim that at least part of what

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constitutes an episode of social pretence involves the capacity to recognise certain beliefs and expectations about the status of the pretence episode (e.g. it's being an episode of pretence).

1. Pretence, pretending, and the disbelief condition

Pretending – the activity that characterises a pretence episode – has been discussed in a variety of contexts; for example, philosophy of mind and in the literature on the cognitive development of children (Weisberg 2015). To begin with, I will understand 'pretending' as involving a propositional attitude; in particular, when X pretends that P, X is in a mental state that (i) has a certain representational content (P), (ii) is connected to certain dispositions to act in certain ways that cause some form of behaviour ('behaviour' is understood broadly as including mental and physical acts), and (iii) may cause certain emotions and other mental states. We may add other conditions depending on the theory of mental states we prefer (e.g. we may include reference to certain phenomenological aspects of the state of pretending); however, in this paper, I will try to remain neutral on these foundational issues on the metaphysics of mind.

A major debate in the recent literature on the development of pretence play concerns which mental states or capacities are required to explain and recognise pretence behaviour in children. On one hand, Alan Leslie and several other authors claim that children as young as 18–24 months can understand that a situation involves pretence, and, further, that their ability to do so is attributable to their capacity to deploy mental representations of certain mental state concepts. That is, children's (and adults') understanding that a situation involves pretence relies on their capacity for *metarepresentation* (Leslie 1987).¹ On this view, children deploy a mental representation representing that the pretending agent(s) – whether themselves or others – are pretending.² This account implies that children deploy the concept 'pretence' (or, following the current notation for referring to concepts, PRETENCE) in recognising

¹This approach has been debated in many places, e.g., Friedman and Leslie (2007). Funkhouser and Spaulding (2009) discusses its relevance to the debate on action, and Goldman (2006) addresses issues related to mindreading. Gomez (2008), Jarrold et al. (1994), Lillard (1993, 2001), and Lillard, Pinkham, and Smith (2011) offer criticisms, as do Stich and Tarzia (2015).

²I follow Jarrold et al. (1994, 448) on the notions of representation and metarepresentation. A mental representation (sometimes also called 'a concept') can refer to an object in the world, but the way in which the representation represents its content may also be a component of such a representation. A metarepresentation is a representation of one or more representations – a way in which a representation is represented or, a concept of a mental concept. See Currie (1998) and Sperber (2000) for essays on the topic.

that someone is pretending. Metarepresentations are not only deployed to recognise pretence episodes, but also in producing such episodes: A metarepresentation deployed in a pretence episode has the structure: <Agent; Informational Relationship; Expression (which is composed of the primary representation and the decoupled representation, standing in the relationship described by the informational relationship)>. The pretence episode in which a child pretends that a banana is a telephone would be expressed as follows: <The child; PRETEND; (of) this banana (that) it is a telephone>. Call this the metarepresentational view. Notice that this view does *not* imply that young children are able to explicitly refer to such metarepresentation(s), for example, by using appropriate linguistic expressions. In fact, children may not even be aware of the fact that they are deploying such a concept. As an agent may have beliefs and desires without having words to describe them, a toddler may pretend and understand pretend behaviour without having the capacity to speak about pretence.

A different approach to pretence is the behaviourist view, which claims that a child need not have an implicit 'theory of mind' (or, at least, concepts of various mental states) to recognise episodes of pretend play as such.³ In an early formulation of this view, all that a child must understand to recognise that an agent is pretending is that the agent is behaving in ways that *would be* appropriate if P were the case (when P is not the case).⁴ Peter Langland-Hassan's *definition* of pretence seems to reflect his support for an *account* of pretence that is in the same ballpark as the behaviourist view, although in a modified form (2012, 2014a, 2014b). According to his view, there is no theoretical need to postulate the existence of a cognitive architecture that includes a distinct cognitive process (a 'box') especially devoted to imaginings or pretences (Langland-Hassan 2012, 167). In fact, Langland-Hassan maintains that what is needed to explain the relevant aspects of pretending is simply the capacity to have counterfactual beliefs – beliefs concerning what would happen *if* something were the case. After a series of painstaking distinctions and refinements, he proposes a definition of pretence divided into

³See Stich and Tarzia (2015, 3–5) for a summary of an early version of this approach, and Gomez (2008). Friedman and Leslie (2007) offers a persuasive criticism of one version of the behaviourist view, to which Stich and Tarzia (2015) is a reply.

⁴The metarepresentational and behaviourist views are not the only two families of theories discussed in the current literature on pretence. For instance, Hannes Rakoczy and collaborators have proposed a model according to which the development and understanding of pretend episodes as such involves an initial (at approximately 2 years of age) understanding of the basic intentional structure of pretending. Such an understanding is taken to involve intentions not reducible to acting-as-if. See Rakoczy (2008) for details. See Bogdan (2005) for a discussion of the evolutionary role of pretence play.

two parts (Langland-Hassan 2014a). The first is a definition of a ‘pretence episode’, followed by a definition of ‘pretending’.⁵ In particular, he writes:

A Pretence Episode occurs when (and only when) one acts with the intention of making some *x* function (or act), at that moment, in *y*-like ways (where *y* refers either to a token or type), while believing that *x* is not, and will not thereby be made into, *y* (or a *y*).

To pretend that *p* is to act with the intention of making some *w* function, at that moment, in *z*-like ways, in the furtherance of a Pretence Episode (Langland-Hassan 2014a, 415).

Take a *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* fan working on her miniatures. While painting her skeleton-warrior miniature, Hyelin is not pretending. The pretence begins when, after the last brushstroke, she puts ‘the skeleton-warrior into the battlefield with its fellow soldiers’. Now that the skeleton is ‘facing a bunch of chaos warriors’ and Hyelin starts pretending that, say, the skeletons are moving in formation, the prop-oriented pretence ‘Fantasy Battle: Undead vs Chaos’ begins. More specifically, the pretence episode is one in which the player in question acts with the intention of making a set of miniatures function, at the moment the miniatures are in the imaginary battlefield, in fantasy-skeleton-like ways (that is, as she imagines, believes, or supposes that skeletons, intended as a *type* of fantasy creature, would behave in the relevant fantasy tradition and in such and such particular circumstances), while believing that the miniatures are not, and will not thereby be made into, real skeleton warriors.

Langland-Hassan also claims that although we can certainly pretend at least part of what we believe, we cannot engage in a pretence in which we believe everything we are pretending (2014a, 404). In addition, he writes: ‘[p]ushing the point to its logical limit: one cannot pretend the world is exactly the way one believes it to be’ (2014a, 404). This seems to imply that we can pretend *almost* everything we believe but that, in the context of an episode of pretence, there must be at least a proposition we do not believe. Among others, Elizabeth Picciuto and Peter Carruthers propose a definition of pretence that includes reference to the relation between what an agent believes and pretence. In particular, they argue that pretence is a form of embodied imagination, that is, acting as if *P* while guided by one’s imagining that *P* (Picciuto and Carruthers 2016, 317). In addition, they write, ‘[w]hat is distinctive of pretending that *P*, in

⁵I have found in the current literature uses of both ‘pretend episode’ and ‘pretence (pretense) episode’. In this paper, I use them interchangeably.

contrast with merely acting as if *P*, we suggest, is that the agent represents what she is doing as an action or as symbolic of an action of the sort *P* (*while not believing that P is true, of course*)' (2016, 315, emphasis mine).⁶ Other scholars' definitions seem to include similar clauses; for example, Juan-Carlos Gomez writes: 'Pretending – acting as if something were the case when one knows that it actually is not' (Gomez 2008, 586). Deena Weisberg claims: 'pretend play crucially involves some form of representation or acting-as-if, such that the behaviors or actions that take place in a pretend game are not meant to literally reflect reality' (Weisberg 2015, 2).

Now, there is a possible ambiguity in all these conditions, an ambiguity that is better appreciated by focusing on the use of 'content', especially in expressions such as 'the content of a pretence'. A first attempt to clarify the idea that a pretence has a content is by making the distinction between the content of an agent's mental state when she is engaged in an episode of pretence and the content of the story that is generated by an act of pretence (that is, what is true-in-the-pretence). Drawing from the vast literature on truth in fiction, we may say that the content of the story generated by an act of pretence need not coincide with the content of the relevant mental states of the agent(s) at issue – a view sometimes referred to as 'implicitism'.⁷ On this understanding, 'the content of a pretence episode' refers to the set of propositions that constitute the story that an act of pretence may partly determine or generate – that is, *what happens* in a pretence episode. For example, suppose that a child pretends that he is a policeman and pretends to arrest his father by tying his father's hands with a string. The content of this pretence episode – what is true *according to* or *in* the story – may include not only, say, that the thief has been handcuffed, but also elements that are not directly or consciously intended by the child. For instance, it may be true according to the pretence episode that the thief has a heart, although this true proposition is likely not included in the content of the pretending child's mental state (Walton 1990: chapter 4).⁸ Suppose that the content of

⁶A similar account is Neil Van Leeuwen's integrated imagination theory. A central claim of this theory is that imaginings may generate action (pretence behaviour) without the mediation of belief – that is, it is not necessarily the case that in order to influence pretence behaviour, an imagining has to produce a belief through which action is then influenced. According to Van Leeuwen, in fact, imaginative and veridical representations can be integrated and can thus influence action *directly* (Van Leeuwen 2011, 2016).

⁷See Woodward (2011) for an overview of the literature on truth in fiction and D'Alessandro (2016) for a criticism of implicitism.

⁸In determining what is true according to a story, one challenge is to identify principles and inferential patterns adequate to the task of sorting out what can reasonably be regarded as part of the story (in the case where author stipulation does not resolve the question). I will not pursue this issue any further here but see Walton (1990) and Stock (2017) for discussion.

the mental state I am in while pretending is that I have handcuffed a thief. When this corresponds to what is happening in the pretence episode (in the pretence episode, I have handcuffed a thief), we can say that the contents overlap. Again, there is a lengthy debate on the nature and extension of truth in fiction (in our case, 'truth in a pretence episode') – not to mention on the nature of mental content – but the above remarks should suffice for our purposes: we can understand the expression 'the content of a pretence' as either referring to the mental state an agent is in when she pretends or as the propositions that represent what happens in an episode of pretence. I will assume that the two 'contents' need not completely overlap and focus on the former sense of the expression.

One formulation of the DC that takes into account this distinction goes as follows: when engaged in an episode of pretence, the content of the agent's mental state must include at least a proposition they believe to be false – what is relevant is what they *regard as* being true-in-the-pretence, not necessarily what *is* true-in-the-pretence. More specifically, the DC can be formulated as follows:

A necessary condition on an agent's pretending that P is that the agent acts with the intention of making some x function (or act), at that moment, in y-like ways (where y refers either to a token or type), *while believing that at least part of the relevant content of their mental state is false.*

The function of the qualification 'relevant' in the clause in italics is to better capture the idea that what the agent should believe to be false is a proposition describing a salient part of the content of their pretence episode.⁹ In other words, a pretending agent should believe to be false, among the various admissible parts of their mental content, at least those parts that are salient to such a pretence episode. In fact, depending on the extension of what is regarded as the admissible mental content of an episode of pretence, we might have a situation in which (i) part of an agent's mental content occurring while pretending is believed to be false but (ii) such a part is not directly connected to the agent's pretence action. For example, while pretending to P, I might, at the same time, entertain a proposition that I believe to be false but that is not connected with my activity of pretending. In this case, if we adopt a theory of mental content such that this irrelevant but temporally compresent belief should count as part of the content of the mental states determining the content

⁹Thanks to an anonymous referee of this journal for raising the issue.

of my pretence, we may plausibly argue that such a belief should not count towards the satisfaction of the DC – hence the use of ‘relevant’ to rule out such a case. Part of Langland-Hassan’s definition of a Pretence Episode, in particular the clause ‘while believing that x is not, and will not thereby be made into, y (or a y)’, can be seen as a plausible specification of this relevance condition, that is, as specifying the clause ‘while believing that at least part of the content of their mental state is false’ – and this is how I will understand the DC in what follows.¹⁰

2. Pretending to be oneself

In this section, I discuss two scenarios, one of which constitutes a counter-example to the DC. In addition to showing that the DC is false, the second scenario draws our attention to one crucial difference between social and solitary pretences: what is essential to some kinds of social pretence is the possession of beliefs about the relevant beliefs of the intended audience (e.g. beliefs about the status of the pretence episode) and the capacity to mind-read other people. Possessing this capacity is crucial in enabling the pretender to notice that others believe that the pretender is pretending. However, pretending does not require that the pretender also believe that part of what she is pretending is false or that the pretence episode has a relevant false content. In particular, some cases of pretending to be oneself do not imply that the pretending agent believes that the content of the mental state of pretending is false.

In what follows, I will understand the activity or state ‘to be oneself in a certain situation’ as involving as a sufficient condition that an agent acts in a way that, under normal circumstances, she would (rationally) recognise as her own usual way of acting in that kind of situation – that is, the way (or ways) she would act were she put in that specific circumstance. If there are plausible descriptions of the following scenarios implying that it is possible to pretend without believing that the content of the pretending is false, then we have a case in which the DC fails. Let us now discuss these cases, the first one of which, albeit unsuccessful, is propedeutic to the second.

Actors sometimes play themselves in films – notable examples are Arnold Schwarzenegger in *The Last Action Hero* (1993), Chuck Norris in *Dodgeball* (2004), Bill Murray in *Zombieland* (2009). (These are admittedly not the finest films around, but artistic merit is not the issue here.)

¹⁰Notice that the DC is only a necessary condition, whereas Langland-Hassan provides a necessary *and* sufficient condition for what it is to be an episode of pretence.

Suppose that the following is an accurate reconstruction of the relevant aspects of *The Last Action Hero* (LAH). Schwarzenegger (AS) plays two roles, Jack Slater (a fictional action hero, who is supposed to be fictional also in [part of] the world of the fiction) and himself (AS*), an actor who plays action heroes. In one version of Leslie's account, when AS is pretending to be Slater, he is, among other things, metarepresenting: I (AS) PRETEND OF ME 'I am Jack Slater'. Or, applying Langland-Hassan's terminology, AS acts with the intention of making himself act, at that moment, in Jack Slater-like ways, while believing that he is not, and will not thereby be made into, Jack Slater. So far so good. Now, the state of affairs 'AS playing himself in the film', can be described as a case of pretence in virtue of AS's deploying this metarepresentation: I (AS) PRETEND OF ME 'I am Arnold Schwarzenegger'. AS acts with the intention of making himself act, at that moment, in AS*-like ways, while believing that he is not, and will not thereby be made into, AS*.

Is this a scenario that violates the DC? We may argue that, in this case, the DC is violated because AS *does* believe that he is AS* while acting in AS*-like ways and he may even believe that the way he is acting (that is, in AS*-like ways) is appropriate to the context and is partly what makes him who he is. However, it is also plausible to claim that AS, while acting, is not really *being himself* or at least does not really believe that AS* is doing what he, AS, would be doing in such a situation. In fact, in this case, AS is following a script and thus (presumably) is not really acting how he would be acting without such a script. While shooting the film in question, AS believed that he was an actor shooting LAH. While he was acting, AS (presumably) did not believe that Jack Slater was a real person – contrary to what AS* believes. In support of this reasoning, we can add that in certain scenes AS plays AS* attending the opening of one of his films. However, while acting, AS did not really believe that he was at a film opening nor (presumably) that he would have acted as in the script. In conclusion, this example does not seem to violate the DC.

I will next offer a different example which, this time, does seem to show that the DC is false. Consider the following scenario. Ulysses lands on the shores of Ithaca and enters his palace. Luckily, he is not recognised by the Proci – even his wife and son, after all those years, do not recognise him at first. (Only the dog does!) ¹¹ Ulysses is taken to be a homeless wanderer, but due to his physical appearance, the Proci ask him to play the part

¹¹In the *Odyssey*, the Proci are men who sought the attention of Penelope, Ulysses' wife, while he was away.

of 'Odysseus' in a charade they believe will amuse them. 'Act like Odysseus, the master of this house!' they instruct him. The Proci want to put on this representation because, we might imagine, they want to entertain themselves by thinking about what Odysseus would do were he in Ithaca. Ulysses plays along and sits at his old table drinking his preferred wine in a way that is indistinguishable from the way Odysseus would sit and drink: Ulysses acts in a Odysseus-like way and is thereby Odysseus (in the pretence episode). That is, Ulysses acts exactly like he *would* act were he in the situation he is in fact in: in this case, he is pretending to be himself. We can imagine Ulysses thinking, 'I will indeed act as the master of this house would; I will wait for my moment to strike!' Acting this way is what Ulysses would have done because, say, he has not been recognised and is waiting for the right moment to have his revenge. Also, Ulysses believes that Odysseus is exactly where Ulysses believes that Ulysses is. Therefore, in this case, Ulysses believes that what he is doing as part of his pretence – for example, drinking wine in such and such way – is what he would do were he in such a situation. In other words, in this context, the relevant Ulysses-like way of acting is identical with the relevant Odysseus-like ways. Ulysses is pretending to be himself in the location where he believes to be. As a result, given the nature of this charade, there is no part of the content of the pretence that is believed to be false. After all, the charade involves only Ulysses pretending to be Odysseus. Crucially, I think that describing this deception (the *Ulysses-Odysseus Charade*) as a pretence episode does not involve any misuse of the concept of pretence. Since this is an admissible description of the pretence episode and given that it violates the DC, the DC is false.

To clarify: the DC holds that not all of the mental content of pretending can be regarded as true by the pretender. But in *Ulysses-Odysseus Charade*, Ulysses both pretends to be Odysseus (in virtue of the fact that he acts in the way he would were he in such a situation) and believes (truly) that he is Odysseus. Using the terminology introduced before, Ulysses is metarepresenting: I (Ulysses) *PRETEND* of me that I am Odysseus, *and* Ulysses believes that he is Odysseus. In fact, Ulysses believes that his actions are both what Odysseus *is* doing and what he *would be* doing (say, because playing along with the charade is the smartest thing to do in that situation), *and* Ulysses is Odysseus. Using Langland-Hassan's terminology, Ulysses not only believes that he is Odysseus, but acts with the intention of making himself act, at that moment, in Odysseus-like ways; moreover, Ulysses believes that his acting in Odysseus-ways *represents or corresponds to how things really are and could be, and such ways makes him*

Odysseus. If this is correct, then we have an example in which there is a violation of the DC (and also of Langland-Hassan's definition of a Pretence Episode).

In the next section, I will discuss and reply to a series of objections to my interpretation of the second scenario.¹²

3. Objections and replies

One objection is that the example is under-described in the sense that it is not an accurate description of a full or complete pretence episode. In particular, someone may find it hard to believe that the entire pretence is just Ulysses' sitting at the table and drinking. My reply is that, first, this example is no less detailed than the examples currently used in the literature to draw general conclusions about pretence – my case is actually more detailed than most of the cases generally discussed *and* taken as relevant. It can be argued that other parts can be added to the charade: for example, one of the Proci may start pretending to be one of Odysseus' servants, talking to him accordingly. In this case, if Ulysses plays along, he may be acting as if he were conversing with one of his servants although he believes that the suitor is not his servant. Perhaps this reading of the extension of the original deceptive pretence is plausible but, again, I would insist that it is not conceptually impossible to have a shorter deceptive pretence that comprises only Odysseus' pretending to be himself in the way previously described. After all, one of the Proci may finally realise what is going on and shout at Ulysses, 'Stop pretending! Now I see it is really you!' In this case, how should we describe what happened before if not as a deceptive episode of pretence (albeit short-lived)? To sum up, a short and simple pretence is still a pretence – and should be classified as such.

Another objection to my example is the following.¹³ Langland-Hassan's definition can handle the previous case and so salvage the DC because, in this case, there is something that is enacted that Ulysses believes isn't the case. For example, Odysseus is not mistaken for a beggar, but Ulysses

¹²As an anonymous referee for this journal has noticed, perhaps the first scenario, if properly modified could also be transformed into a counterexample to the DC. For example, we can imagine a scenario in which AS pretends to be himself as an actor and in which the director is AS himself. In the movie, which consists only of AS*, AS follows the script that AS himself prepared – a script detailing accurately what AS would have done. We might argue that, in this case, AS is pretending to be himself, and that AS* is doing exactly what AS would be doing in that situation – a violation of the DC and of Langland-Hassan's definition of a pretence episode. For reasons of space, I will focus my discussion only on my second scenario.

¹³Many thanks to Neil Van Leeuwen for raising this issue.

believes that Ulysses has been mistaken for a beggar. So, Ulysses disbelieves part of what is pretended (namely that Odysseus was not mistaken for a beggar upon returning to his home). There are several ways of replying. For instance, we may insist that this particular belief about Odysseus is not part of the content of Ulysses' pretending – the content of his pretending does not have to contain or involve the proposition that Odysseus is not mistaken for a beggar. To support this point, we may emphasise the distinction between the content of a pretence episode from what the agent may believe about the pretence episode or her pretending. We may further develop this line of reasoning by pointing out that there is a distinction between what is true *in* the pretence story and what is true *about* the pretence story: in this case, Ulysses may believe certain propositions about the story (or parts of the story, such as one of the characters in it) that are not also propositions true in the story he is enacting or parts of the content of his mental state of pretending. The distinctions among what is true in the pretence, the content of his mental state and what is true about them mirrors the distinction made in the philosophy of fiction between fictive and meta-fictive discourse (Currie 1990; Walton 1990). In particular, fictive discourse provides the content of a fiction whereas meta-fictive discourse includes utterances that affirm something about the content of a fiction. In conclusion, I may accept that Ulysses believes that Odysseus has not been mistaken for a beggar but this is compatible with the negation of the DC.

Another objection is that the best description of the case at issue is that Ulysses is *not* pretending, and so my example does not show that the DC is false. More specifically, the *Ulysses-Odysseus Charade* scenario would be better described as one in which Ulysses is not pretending and is instead simply taking advantage of the Proci's false beliefs in order to deceive them. If no pretence is involved, then the scenario is not a counterexample to the DC. My reply to this point is that Ulysses is taking part in a pretence episode *and also* deceiving the Proci in virtue of recognising (1) their intention to take part in a pretence episode, (2) their belief that Ulysses is not Odysseus, and (3) their meta-pretence beliefs: Ulysses exploits this advantageous epistemic point of view.¹⁴ The point is that we cannot simply discard the intentions of the Proci and of Ulysses with respect to their actions and how they interpret the actions of the agents involved (e.g. Ulysses intends to take part in a

¹⁴ I do not have the space to offer a systematic account of the connection between pretence and deception. See Martin (2009), for various definitions of deception.

'realistic' charade). In conclusion, given the intentions of the people involved, I think that there is a legitimate sense in which what Ulysses is doing can be properly described as pretending.

The supporter of the DC may further argue that Ulysses is merely 'pretending to pretend' – after all, he is Odysseus and he can pretend to be pretending by simply being himself, that is, by not pretending. If the key terms are properly qualified, I do not object to this way of putting the scenario. In particular, I think that the expression 'pretending by not pretending' (if properly qualified) applies fairly well to what Ulysses is doing – even though the second occurrence of 'pretending' in the expression 'pretending by not pretending' seems to presuppose the truth of the DC. That is, if the DC is true, then someone can pretend that the character in the pretence is himself only if he (here, Ulysses) also thinks that the way he (Ulysses) would act and the way the character (Odysseus) acts must differ in the specific situation. If we understand the first occurrence of 'pretending' (pretending_{Not-DC}) as standing for an activity that may not satisfy the DC, then it is possible to say that Ulysses is pretending_{Not-DC} by not pretending_{DC}. If my opponent replies that pretending_{DC} is the proper way of understanding the activity of pretending and uses this intuition as a premise for an argument against my understanding of the charade, then it seems that she is begging the question against the conclusion I draw from my description of the scenario. That is, she is presupposing what is in question, namely, whether the DC is true. I did not beg the question against my opponent because I have given (in my reply to the third objection) independent reasons to believe that my description of the scenario is better supported – I have suggested that the intentions and expectations of the relevant agents better support my reading.

4. Conclusions

If the DC is false, are there other conditions that a definition of pretence should include? I do not have a full account, but one suggestion emerges from considering the *Ulysses-Odysseus Charade*. This event, we can argue, is an instance of a pretence episode because the Proci believe that it is *and* Ulysses, recognising this, acts accordingly – he acts as if he were Odysseus. It is the (unusual) action-pattern of both the audience (the Proci) and the active pretender (Ulysses) *and* the recognition by the pretender that the audience thinks a certain pretence is occurring that makes the charade a deceptive pretence. The Proci, because they do not

recognise that Ulysses is Odysseus, do not think that what is true in the charade is also true in the actual world; if they did, they would probably run away or arm themselves.

The previous discussion opens several lines of enquiry that have not been very much explored in the current philosophical literature on pretence. For instance, my discussion of *Ulysses-Odysseus Charade* points to some of the structural differences between certain kinds of social and solitary pretences. More specifically, social pretences are pretences in part because of what (part or most of) the audience members believe and their attitudes toward the content of the pretence (their meta-pretence beliefs) – and also because the agent believes that the (relevant part of the) audience believes that a pretence is going on (the pretender's beliefs about the audience's meta-pretence beliefs). However, this does not mean that the content of the pretending is false. Rather, in complex cases such as the one discussed in this paper, it seems that what matters most is that the pretenders are able to correctly detect some of the audience's relevant beliefs about their pretending.

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