



## Understanding Pretense: A Look at Theories of Motivation

Understanding Pretense: A Look at Theories of Motivation

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By

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## ABSTRACT

Over the past couple of decades, we have seen a tremendous explosion of research concerning the human's capacity to engage in episodes of pretense. One of the most interesting questions that have emerged out of this research involves the motivations that underlie this type of action. Specifically, why do we pretend? What are our motivations for engaging in this type of action? In response to these questions, a few scholars have offered theories which purport to explain our motivations for engaging in episodes of pretense—i.e. Peter Carruthers' action-based (emotional reward) theory of motivation, Shaun Nichols and Stephen Stich's thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation, and David Velleman's '*i-belief*' and '*i-desire*' theory of motivation. However, these theories of motivation seem to fall short, for they do not seem to capture the full array of motivations which underlie our episodes of pretense. In fact, these theories (singular account theories) posit a single motivating factor for human pretense. Consequently, they fail to account for some of the more inconspicuous episodes of pretense that humans engage in. Through an analysis of action, of which pretense is an expansive subset, we are able to identify, and thus fully appreciate, these inconspicuous episodes of pretense as well as distinguish a wide array of motivating factors from which we are impelled to pretend. This alleviates us from the impossible burden of trying to explain a broad subset of action (pretense) in terms of a single motivating factor as the singular account theories would have us do. As it stands, pretense, like action, is motivated by a wide variety of motivational factors. Thus, we should prefer a pluralistic account of motivation in order to fully appreciate the wide array of motivational factors that prompt human pretense.

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For me, writing this thesis has been a long and educational journey which I have thoroughly enjoyed. My hope is that I will have an opportunity, in the future, to further improve upon my views concerning pretense and the imagination. In the meantime, I hope that this thesis will contribute to the overall scholarship that surrounds the human capacity to pretend as well as inspire others to delve into the wonderful world of pretense and the human imagination.

## **DEDICATION**

I am dedicating this thesis to my mom and dad, for all of their love and support over the years. Without their support, this thesis would not have been possible.



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I. Introduction: The Motivation Question-----	1
II. Cases of Pretense-----	17
i. Varieties of Action-----	18
ii. Types of Motivation-----	27
iii. The Cases-----	39
III. Theories of Motivation-----	47
i. Shaun Nichols and Stephen Stich and the Possible World Box-----	48
ii. Peter Carruthers and Emotional Rewards-----	57
iii. David Velleman and the ' <i>i-belief</i> ' and the ' <i>i-desire</i> '-----	68
IV. Conclusion-----	83

## **I. Introduction: The Motivation Question**

Throughout my early childhood, I often observed my younger siblings engaging in some form of pretend play whether it was the occasional, individual role play or some type of collaborative group pretense. I can, for instance, vividly recall one instance some years ago in which my two younger sisters collaborated in an effort to act as if they were shopping for food in a supermarket. One sibling took on the role of the cashier while the other took on the role of the customer, and an episode of pretense ensued. The two acted in much the same way as a real cashier and real customer would in many of the enacted situations. Of course there was some variation and creativity as well, along with the use of props which were used to signify certain things—e.g. action figures would be used and treated as produce. During one specific instance of the collaborative pretense episode—the one I recall most vividly—the cashier grabbed a handful of caramels (plastic army men) from the counter (a stack of hard-shell luggage), put them in a sack and declared, “Your total is one hundred and fifty dollars.” The customer promptly replied, “Thank you, my husband is going to enjoy these caramels.” The customer then proceeded to reach into her purse and withdraw some money (a series of marbles) in an effort to pay the cashier. The cashier accepted the money (marbles) and placed it in the cash register (a cigar box). When the transaction came to an end, the customer reached into her sack, withdrew a caramel (a plastic army man) and proceeded to eat it (pretended to put the plastic army man in her mouth and began chewing vigorously). The pretense episode ended as the customer walked out of the store (bedroom) and headed home (living room).

Episodes of pretense, like the one just presented, are quite common among human beings, especially in early childhood beginning as early as eighteen months of age.<sup>1</sup> Of course, it is harder to find examples of pretense in adults as espoused in the literature.<sup>2</sup> However, it is my conjecture that this is due to a common misconception concerning pretense. Usually when we think of pretense, we think of pretend play—that is, we associate pretending with playing. And of course, we would never think that adults play as much as children; adults are more focused and practical. So, children engage in pretense more than adults, right? Wrong! It follows that children engage in pretense as a form of play more often than adults; but, it does not follow that children engage in more pretense in general. In other words, play is not a necessary condition for pretense. Once we realize this, we can find numerous examples of pretense in adults. But, before we discuss some of these examples, perhaps it would be both prudent and helpful if we had a working definition for pretense.<sup>3</sup>

First, I want to distinguish the difference between pretending and imagining. Imagining is a purely mental activity—a mental image or mental journey through a possible state of affairs if you will. When we sit in our armchairs and think about our future activities or we think about possible worlds, we are imagining. Pretending, on the other hand, is a physical representation or manifestation (an ‘acting out’) of a mental activity. In other words, pretending is an *action*. Perhaps Angeline Lillard says it best

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<sup>1</sup> Carruthers (2006b), p. 280; Friedman and Leslie (2007), p. 105; Ganea, Lillard and Turkheimer (2004), p. 214; Kavanaugh (2005), p. 153; Lillard (2002b), p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> Nichols and Stich (2003), pp. 20-21.

<sup>3</sup> Rigorously defining ‘pretense’ has been largely neglected in much of the literature as it is usually assumed that we all have at least an intuitive understanding of pretense. However, most scholars do agree that pretense is a deliberate distortion of reality. For example, Leslie (1987) states that “pretending is... ‘acting as if’ something is the case when it is not.” See also Lillard (2002a) for a nice definition of pretense. Whatever the case may be, my hope is to improve upon these definitions in the hopes of gaining a better understanding of pretense.

when she says that “Pretense is an act of projective imagining.”<sup>4</sup> Episodes of pretense are performed by an agent (a body) as a result of the agent’s mental activity—i.e. pretending is something that an agent (a body) is physically motivated to do.

So, it would be prudent to offer a good definition of action in general since pretense is an action of some sort. Now, we know that action is a physical manifestation (an outward bodily movement) performed by an agent as a result of an agent’s mental activity.<sup>5</sup> But, what is this mental activity? Surely not all mental activity can motivate an agent to act. In short, the type of mental activity that motivates an agent to act is a guider/motivator pair.<sup>6</sup> The paradigm example of a guider/motivator pair is a belief/desire pair—the belief guides the action while the desire provides the motivation to get there. For example, if an agent has both a belief that pretending will provide him with enormous amounts of pleasure and a desire to achieve enormous amounts of pleasure, then the agent will engage in an episode of pretense in an effort to attain enormous amounts of pleasure. That is, the agent’s desire for pleasure provides an end (or goal) while his belief about pretense informs him of a way to achieve that end, prompting an episode of pretense. So, guider/motivator pairs are necessary to motivate action. A guider without a corresponding motivator will not result in action, and vice versa. This can be illustrated if we were to imagine a case in which an agent had a desire for pleasure without any beliefs about how to attain pleasure. In this case, the agent would have the thrust to attain pleasure, but he would lack the instructions on how to

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<sup>4</sup> Lillard (2002a), p. 104.

<sup>5</sup> The definition of action presented here deals only with the physical action (bodily movements) of an agent. As a result, I must make it clear that I am not endorsing the position that *all* actions are physical. It may be the case that mental actions exist—e.g. imagining, thinking and so on. However, the existence of mental action is controversial; and, it is not my intention to take a position on this issue.

<sup>6</sup> Funkhouser and Spaulding (forthcoming).

attain it. As a result, his desire for pleasure would not motivate him act. Therefore, guider/motivator pairs are necessary to prompt action. Now, at this point, I believe that we are in a position to offer a nice definition of action.

Action: a physical manifestation, performed by an agent, resulting from the agent's guider/motivator pairs.

Now that we have a solid definition for action, we find ourselves in a better position to provide a good, working definition of pretense. We know that pretense is an action; but, this cannot be the whole story. Although all episodes of pretense are actions, it is not the case that all actions are episodes of pretense. Some feature of pretense, then, must set it apart from action in general. Thus, pretense is an action of a certain kind. Keeping this in mind, we can begin to formulate a definition for pretense.

Pretense<sub>1</sub>: an action of a certain kind.

The above definition of pretense entreats us to ask the question, what feature do episodes of pretense have in common that all other actions lack? It seems that pretense is different than action in general simply because all episodes of pretense seem to retreat, in some sense, from reality. When we observe pretense in others, we often observe actions which do not conform to reality whether (i) someone is pretending to be something they are not, (ii) they are pretending that an object or person is something other than it really is, or (iii) they are just pretending that a distorted view of reality is the case in general. This is the essence of pretending. In the pretense episode outlined above, we can clearly see how the cashier and the customer enacted a distorted view of reality or, in essence, enacted an episode of pretense. First, one of my siblings acted as if she were a cashier; however, she was not *really* a cashier and thus pretended to be something she was not. Furthermore, both the cashier and customer in the pretense episode treated the plastic

army men as caramels, thus treating objects as something other than what they were. The use of props is a classic example of reality distortion. So, it seems that pretense is an action that does not conform to reality because the agent's actions during pretense result from guiders (or representations) that are not representative of the agent's reality. For instance, in the episode of pretense outlined above, one my siblings put a caramel in her mouth as the result of both the desire to eat caramel and the representation, 'plastic army men are caramels' (a representation that is not representative of her reality). The representation, 'plastic army men are not caramels', is one that is representative of her reality. As a result, her action (putting a caramel in her mouth) does not match up with her reality. In reality, she puts a plastic army man in her mouth. Thus, her action does not conform to reality—i.e. her action constitutes an episode of pretense.<sup>7</sup> All in all, the distortion of reality seems to be a common thread which weaves through each and every case of pretense, as opposed to action in general. So, our definition is amended as such:

Pretense<sub>2</sub>: an action that *does not conform to the bounds of reality*.<sup>8</sup>

At this point, a clarification is needed. Namely, what exactly are the bounds of reality? I would like to make use of a distinction to clarify what I mean by 'the bounds of reality' as it is used in the above definition of pretense. When any normal person thinks about reality, they often associate the term with the actual state of affairs, independent of perception. For example, if someone perceives, and thus genuinely believes, that the

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<sup>7</sup> My sibling could have had the desire to eat caramels coupled with the mistaken belief that plastic army men are caramels. But, the resulting action would not have been an episode of pretense because the action would have been guided by a representation (a belief) that is representative of her reality. Instead, her action was an episode of pretense because it was the result of the mental representation, 'plastic army men are caramels,' which is a representation that is not representative of her reality. She represented plastic army men as caramels through her action; and as a result, her action did not conform to her reality—i.e. her action did not reflect that plastic army men are not caramels.

<sup>8</sup> An action that 'does not conform to the bounds of reality' is an action that 'is guided by a representation that is not representative of the agent's representations of reality.'

earth is flat, it is common for us to think that the person has a distorted view of reality because the earth's being flat does not conform to the actual state of affairs (which is independent of perception). If this same person acts on his belief that the earth is flat, his action would be considered an episode of pretense, according to the above definition, because he is acting in a way that does not conform to the bounds of reality (actual state of affairs). But, surely this is not correct. We do not think this person is pretending; we just think that he is acting on a false belief about the world. So, surely we cannot mean that 'the bounds of reality' refers to the actual state of affairs. Acting on a false belief is not an episode of pretense. Instead, 'the bounds of reality' in our definition of pretense refers to an individual's perceived reality. That is, episodes of pretense are marked by an agent's actions that do not conform to his individual representations of reality—i.e. his belief set, for example. Under this meaning of 'the bounds of reality', the above definition of pretense would correctly show that the agent who believes that the world is flat is not engaged in pretense because his actions are guided by a representation (e.g. the earth is flat) that is representative of his perceived reality. He is simply acting on a false belief. Therefore, it would perhaps be prudent to amend our definition of pretense to take this distinction into account.

Pretense<sub>3</sub>: an action that does not conform to the bounds of *perceived* reality.

However, we are not done here. Following Paul Harris, this definition is not quite complete, for certain conceptual knowledge seems to be maintained in many, if not all, episodes of pretense—e.g. space and time, cause and effect.<sup>9</sup> Further, in many episodes

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<sup>9</sup> "...children do depart from the real world in their pretend play but take much of their conceptual knowledge with them. In particular, they still acknowledge the causal powers of the real world." Harris (2000), p. 8.

of pretense, many of the agent's own beliefs are maintained and used during the episode. Thus, episodes of pretense are almost always only partial distortions of our perceived reality or, as Harris states regarding early childhood pretense, "...pretense is at most a distortion of reality."<sup>10</sup> Notice how both of the pretenders in the above pretense episode implicitly believed themselves to be corporeal beings rather than beings outside of space and time. They also implicitly accepted the general laws of causation throughout the supermarket scenario. Furthermore, the actors adhered to many of their established beliefs such as the belief that one should always pay for things before they take them out of the supermarket, for example. So, certain fundamental concepts, as well as certain beliefs, were maintained in the episode of pretense given above. And, this seems very reasonable to assume for all episodes of pretense. So, let us amend our definition of pretense once more to reflect the above consideration.

Pretense<sub>4</sub>: an action that does not *entirely* conform to the bounds of perceived reality.

The use of 'entirely' in the above definition signifies that it is both necessary and sufficient for an action to deviate (not conform) in at least one respect from the agent's perceived reality in order for the action to be classified as an act of pretense. Now, this definition seems to be a good definition for pretense. This working definition should work for now.

Armed with this definition, we are now able to fully distinguish pretense in adults just as well as we are able to distinguish it in children. Pretense is simply an 'acting out' of guider/motivator pairs in a way that does not entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality. Let me give a few brief examples of adult pretense. Suppose that I had

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<sup>10</sup> Harris (2000), p. 8.



no experience with carpentry or of hammering nails into wood. One day my friend approaches and asks me if I could nail a couple of boards together. I, of course, tell him I do not know how. He then proceeds to instruct me on the procedure by using hand gestures, for he does not have access to his actual hammer, nails and boards at the present moment. These hand gestures are often a form of adult pretense. My friend is pretending to hold a hammer and a nail; he is instructing me on just how to use the items to complete the desired task by using his hand motions. I may in turn pretend that I am hammering a nail to convey that I now understand the procedure. Adult hand gestures are an important form of pretense. Another obvious, and perhaps more straightforward, example of adult pretense is the performing arts. Every time we step into a theater to watch a dramatic play or pass a mime on the street, we experience a form of adult pretense. Every actor and actress on any stage spends much of their lives engaging in episodes of pretense, pretending to be somebody other than who they are while simultaneously acting out episodes that do not entirely conform to their perceived reality. This type of adult pretense is perhaps the most recognizable, aside from the episodes in which adults collaborate with their young children in the form of pretend play.

However, there are some forms of adult pretense which are very tricky to detect. One such form is that of lying or the art of deceit. When we lie to someone, we are often essentially pretending that a certain distorted state of affairs is the case when it actually has little or no conformity to our perceived reality. For instance, suppose someone killed their neighbor one night and the authorities came to their house the next day to question them about the murder. It would be likely that the individual would claim he had nothing to do with the murders. Perhaps the individual would even provide an alibi as to his

whereabouts. This individual is pretending that he did not kill his neighbor so long as his actions do not conform to the bounds of perceived reality. The individual will, of course, pretend to cooperate with the authorities in bringing a killer to justice and act in ways that point suspicion elsewhere. The individual would perhaps even pretend to scour the town in hopes of finding a body. But, this act of deceit is simply an episode of pretense in which the agent does not act entirely in conformity with his perceived reality. The individual knows exactly where the body is located and has no intention of giving that information up. All in all, deception and the use of hand gestures, among other things, are, in many cases, simply pretending so defined.<sup>11</sup> And in that sense, childhood pretend play is closely related to these adult acts of pretense. Thus, once we extinguish the misconception that pretense is a narrow concept, we are able to bridge the gap between adult and childhood pretense.

Obviously, there are still questions to be answered, a couple of which I will try to briefly answer at present. When we compare childhood episodes of pretense to that of adult episodes of pretense, they are both fundamentally the same as outlined above. However, it is easy to notice how different they are as well. Although there are no

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<sup>11</sup> For those who think, for this very reason, that the proposed definition of pretense is problematic, I must ask that we open ourselves to the possibility of discovering new types of pretense through our analysis of the concept. The purpose of providing a definition was to discover what actions counted as pretense, however unintuitive the classification may be. To give a very crude analogy, let us take a look at animals, fish and mammals specifically. At one time, before the advent of modern biology, it was probably quite common for dolphins and whales to be considered fish rather than mammals, for they lived in water and resembled other fish more so than other mammals. However, under the analyzed definitions of fish and mammal provided by modern biology, it is almost unanimously accepted that dolphins and whales are mammals rather than fish as the previous, pre-modern definitions would suggest. This great scientific discovery stems from opening ourselves to the possibility that our new analyses may lead to some unintuitive results which are nonetheless correct. As a result, this example shows that we should not discredit our analyses simply because they yield unintuitive results. With this in mind, I am simply asking that we at least open ourselves to the possibility of discovering that some actions are episodes of pretense, although the classification of such actions may sometimes be unintuitive.

rudimentary demarcations, children seem to engage in pretend play while adults tend to engage in other forms of pretense. That is, adults rarely tend to engage in pretend play. How are we to account for this? I believe that the answer lies in our motivations and propensities toward such behavior.

Let us revisit our initial case of pretend play involving my two younger siblings discussed at the outset of this paper. When reminiscing about this and other vivid episodes of pretense from my childhood, I often wonder what motivated the agents in these episodes to act the way that they did—i.e. in a way that was, at least somewhat, inconsistent with their perceived reality. And in pondering this question, I often reminisce about my own episodes of past pretense in hopes of finding some type of answer to the motivation question. However, as I mull over my various acts of past pretense, it is hard to pin down just what it is that motivated me to act in a manner that was inconsistent with my perceived reality. Of course, I could give some answers; but would they be correct answers? Perhaps it would be useful to subscribe to some type of common sense line of reasoning in an effort to pin down some of these answers. So, let us ask ourselves, what motivated my siblings to act out their episode of pretense as recounted above?

Many common sense answers could be given. Obviously, the episode was an instance of pretend play; so, perhaps the acting out of such a scenario was a means of having fun—a means of enjoyment. No doubt, the two girls had previously participated in, and were familiar with, shopping experiences by way of grocery shopping with their parents. Perhaps the girls had remembered the experience to be a fun one, and were motivated to act it out as a means to harness the same pleasure they had experienced

during a real shopping episode. Perhaps the girls had admired the cashier, and thought it would bring them some type of pleasure if they could put themselves in the cashier's shoes—act as if they were a cashier. Perhaps engaging in this pretense episode was merely a means to engage in collaborative play with another for the mere sake of enjoyment, or perhaps even a means to be accepted by the other sibling. It is even possible, and perhaps even more likely, that a combination of motivations contributed to the sibling's engagement in the pretense act. All of these answers are good common sense answers to the motivation question.

However, what if we were to take the episode of pretense, as recounted above, and stipulate that one of the siblings was seventeen years of age while the other was four years of age. Further, the seventeen-year-old was babysitting her younger sibling. Now, can we give the same common sense answers to the motivation question? It appears that we cannot. In this case, common sense would tell us that the older sibling would have different motivations to pretend than her younger sibling. Perhaps the seventeen-year-old is motivated to engage in the pretense episode as a combination of both appeasing her younger sibling (keeping her out of trouble) and enjoying the smile that it brings to her face. The bottom line is that common sense tells us that we all have very different motivations that drive us to act out our pretend scenarios.

This brings us back to our initial question—i.e. what motivates us to engage in pretense. There are two common approaches we can take in trying to answer this question, a distal (evolutionary, sociological) approach or a proximate (psychological,

beliefs and desires) approach.<sup>12</sup> It is my intention to focus on the proximate approach to the motivation question in this paper. However, I would like to briefly discuss the distal approach for three reasons. First, the approach is highly referenced in the literature. Second, it is an important approach for it seems possible, if not probable, that the proximate approach reduces to the distal approach—i.e. perhaps our psychological motivations can be reduced to evolutionary (biological) motivations. Lastly, this approach will provide a nice segue into our latter discussion.

When we take a look at pretense from an evolutionary perspective, pretense behavior is a remarkably odd behavior.<sup>13</sup> As Alan Leslie puts the matter:

Pretending ought to strike the cognitive psychologist as a very odd sort of ability. After all, from an evolutionary point of view, there ought to be a high premium on the veridicality of cognitive processes. The perceiving, thinking organism ought, as far as possible, to get things right. Yet pretense flies in the face of this fundamental principle. In pretense we deliberately distort reality.<sup>14</sup>

In other words, there seems to be no evolutionary advantage—no evolutionary motivation if you will—to engage in pretense, or these flights of fancy. Now, over the course of the past decade, a number of theories have been offered which purport to solve this perplexing evolutionary problem. Perhaps the most prominent and well developed theory is one offered by Peter Carruthers. His theory maintains that childhood pretense sharpens creativity and problem-solving in adults which thus leads to an important evolutionarily advantage.<sup>15</sup> So, for example, an agent who pretends often has a higher propensity as an adult to think creatively as opposed to an agent who rarely entertains hypothetical or pretend scenarios. As a result, agents who have a history riddled with pretense will be

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<sup>12</sup> Carruthers (2006a), p. 89.

<sup>13</sup> Carruthers (2002); Carruthers (2006b); Harris (2000); Leslie (1987); Nichols and Stich (2003).

<sup>14</sup> Leslie (1987), p. 412.

<sup>15</sup> Carruthers (2002); Carruthers (2006b).

more creative and better at problem solving than agents who lack such a past. So, the story goes, agents who possess superior problem solving capabilities due to their pretense-saturated past will have access to better tools and better methods for gathering food than their pretense-deficient, less creative counterparts, thus leading to a big evolutionary advantage for the former. The evolutionary virtues of adult creativity seem to provide a plausible explanation as to why we engage in childhood pretense, assuming that pretense does indeed bolster such creativity.<sup>16</sup> Another possible explanation for childhood pretense involves counter-factual reasoning. Perhaps pretense is a byproduct of the human capacity to entertain possible world scenarios.<sup>17</sup> On this view, counter-factual reasoning provides some type of evolutionary advantage. Pretense is simply a byproduct of the cognitive mechanisms which provide the basis for our counter-factual reasoning.

Along with these two theories, I will suggest one of my own. Perhaps pretense itself provides us an evolutionary advantage in adulthood. We should all agree, for example, that the art of deceit (lying) is most certainly an evolutionary advantage, especially in a state of nature. If we recall from above, deception is none other than an episode of adult pretense—that is, an action that does not entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality. Moreover, I see no reason to suppose that acting in general does not provide an evolutionary advantage in itself. For example, opossums ‘pretend’, assuming they have the cognitive capability to pretend, that they are dead in order to avoid capture. Perhaps we, like the opossum, pretend in order to gain some practical advantage.

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<sup>16</sup> Like the lion cub that practices his hunting (which is important in adult life) by playful pouncing, we too must practice pretense (which is important in adult life) through our pretend play. See Carruthers (1996); Carruthers (2002).

<sup>17</sup> This theory seems to be suggested in Nichols and Stich (2003).

Whatever the case may be, we are a species of pretenders. And, it is clear that we begin to pretend at a very early stage in our lives. Pretending results from important evolutionary advantages whether we can specifically identify these advantages or not.

I have now presented three possible evolutionary explanations for human pretense. However, I must note that these theories are not mutually exclusive—e.g. one could claim that pretense is an evolutionary byproduct of counter-factual reasoning that, in turn, gives rise to creativity which is evolutionarily advantageous—and I do not necessarily endorse one over another. Whatever the case may be, I am confident that pretense is somehow connected to our evolutionary fitness. However, I am not going to speculate any longer about these distal theories of motivation for it is out of the scope of this paper. Instead, I would like to move on and spend the rest of my time discussing the various proximate (psychological) theories of motivation.

Proximate theories of motivation abound in the literature. Over the past two decades, a handful of scholars have written extensively on our motivation to engage in pretense and have developed many compelling theories.<sup>18</sup> However, I am of the opinion that all of these theories fail to fully account for the motivation behind human pretense. It is my aim for the remainder of this paper to discuss these theories of motivation in great detail, as well as to highlight their critical shortcomings and perhaps even offer some ways in which they can be improved upon. The following is the list of theories that we will discuss and critique throughout this paper: Peter Carruthers' action-based (emotional reward) theory of motivation, Shaun Nichols and Stephen Stich's thought-

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<sup>18</sup> Most notably Carruthers (2006a); Carruthers (2006b); Velleman (2000); Nichols and Stich (2003).

based (counter-factual) theory of motivation, and David Velleman's '*i-belief*' and '*i-desire*' theory of motivation.

Now, I would like to note a few similarities between these three theories of motivation. First, each theory endorses some type of guider/motivator pair which accounts for the resulting episode of pretense. In most cases, these guiders and motivators are beliefs and desires, respectively. In the case of Velleman's theory of motivation, imaginary beliefs and imaginary desires take on the guider/motivator role—that is, imaginary beliefs and desires are not real beliefs and desires, but can nonetheless motivate. So, we all seem to agree that our guiders and motivators are what fundamentally move us to act out episodes of pretense. The disagreement arises over the question of which specific guiders and motivators actually lead to episodes of pretense. For example, Carruthers holds that we are essentially motivated to engage in pretense by our desires for emotional rewards rather than our desires to eat, drink and so on. In contrast, Nichols and Stich maintain that we are motivated by our desire to act out our entertained, possible world scenarios.

This leads to my second point. Namely, all three theories of motivation offer a *singular* account of motivation.<sup>19</sup> In other words, the theories claim that pretense behavior results from a single type of motivation. However, I find this supposition very perplexing. Common sense would seem to tell us that we pretend as the result of a wide variety of motivations. For example, we can be motivated to pretend in expectation of an

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<sup>19</sup> One could argue that Velleman's theory of motivation is pluralistic because numerous *i-belief/i-desire* pairs could prompt motivation. I am, however, going to group this theory with the other theories of motivation for the simple reason that Velleman's theory neglects a wealth of guider/motivator pairs—e.g. belief/desire pairs. In other words, their account of motivation is singular because they hold that pretense results from a single type of guider/motivator pair rather than multiple types of guider/motivator pairs.



emotional reward or we can be motivated to pretend for our own self interest or well-being, say if we had a gun pointed at our head. It is perhaps even plausible to suppose that many episodes of pretense are initiated by a combination of motivating factors. And for this reason, I prefer a *pluralistic* account of motivation rather than one of the many singular accounts we find throughout the literature, for I do not believe any singular account offered thus far is broad enough to capture all the motivating factors that prompt pretense in human beings. And it seems that both Eric Funkhouser and Shannon Spaulding would agree as espoused in their response to one specific, singular account of motivation.

While we accept that much pretense might have such a motivation, we prefer a *pluralistic* account. We allow, for example, that children can pretend according to their imagination without wanting to behave as the characters in their imagination behave. And we see no reason to think that the motivation for pretense is unitary. (After all, what other broad category of action has a single type of motivation?)<sup>20</sup>

In summary, my hope is to show that the proximate (singular account) theories of motivation found in the literature fail to account for *all* of the motivating factors that prompt episodes of pretense—that is, they fail to classify some clear cases of pretense as pretense. Thus, we must conclude that they are incomplete theories. If I am correct, I believe we will be in a better position to understand the motivations behind pretense in human beings. I will now move on to chapter two where I will begin to explain the methodology that will be used to show that singular account theories of motivation are, at best, incomplete.

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<sup>20</sup> Funkhouser and Spaulding (forthcoming).

## II. Cases of Pretense

To begin our exploration and critique of the various proximate (singular account) theories for the motivation underlying pretense episodes, I would like to briefly discuss the methodology that will be employed. We often observe pretense in others; and as humans, we are often very good at discerning pretense from non-pretense action in others, even from a very young age.<sup>21</sup> As a result, it is no surprise that pretense theorizing is largely an empirical matter. In other words, theories of motivation rely heavily on the various established empirical pretense episodes for their validity—i.e. theories of motivation rely on the various empirically observed cases of pretense being classified as such by the theory. If a theory of motivation is unable to classify a clear case of pretense as such, then the theory is, at best, incomplete. And it is my contention that the three theories of motivation mentioned in the previous chapter exhibit this very flaw. Namely, they fail to account for each and every case of pretense. To validate this claim, it is my intention in this chapter to offer a wide array of intuitive pretense scenarios that fit under the definition of pretense as defined in the previous chapter. Then, in the chapters that follow, I will explore the aforementioned theories of motivation and illustrate how they fail to incorporate all of the established cases of pretense into their theory.

Let us begin with our definition of pretense. Pretense is an action that does not entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality. So, we must ask ourselves what type of actions fit this description. A number of common actions readily come to mind:

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<sup>21</sup> Friedman and Leslie (2007); Leslie (1994); Rakoczy and Tomasello (2006).

pretend play, acting and various other types of simulation or role play among other things. All of these actions certainly fit under our definition of pretense; but, it seems likely that there are other actions that would fit under the definition as well. We need to identify them. So, let us take a look at these common types of pretense in an effort to identify some broader categories of pretense. We will begin by first examining action in general.

### **i. Varieties of Action**

What is an action? An action is simply a physical manifestation, performed by an agent, resulting from the agent's guider/motivator pairs. Do actions necessarily involve intentionality? Unfortunately, any answer given to this question will certainly meet with controversy. However, I am of the opinion that an action can either be intentional or unintentional depending on the description under which it falls as long as there is at least one description under which the action is intentional. Borrowing from Donald Davidson, "...a man is an agent of an act if what he does can be described under an aspect that makes it intentional."<sup>22</sup> Let us take a look at one of Davidson's examples to illustrate his position. Suppose I have both the belief that flipping the light switch will turn on the light and the desire to turn the light on. My action of turning on the light will result from the combination of the specific, aforementioned belief and desire. Thus, it is an intentional action—i.e. my belief and desire caused me to act (to turn on the light). Now, let us suppose that I consequently alerted a burglar to the fact that I was home when I flipped the light switch. It was certainly not my intention to alert a burglar; but, it seems that alerting a burglar, in some sense, is an action that should be attributed to me rather

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<sup>22</sup> Davidson (1971), p. 7.

than some mere happening. It was, after all, my belief and desire that ultimately resulted in the burglar being alerted, albeit unintentionally. According to Davidson, the act of alerting a burglar and the act of turning on the light are identical actions under different descriptions. Under the description of turning on the light, the act of turning on the light is an intentional one while under the description of alerting a burglar it is unintentional. However, alerting the burglar is still an action because it can be described in an aspect that makes it intentional—namely, alerting the burglar is identical with, and can be described as, intentionally turning on the light.<sup>23</sup> Thus, actions can either be intentional or unintentional depending upon which descriptions they fall under.

Now, if Davidson is correct in his analysis of action, we can be confident that actions must be either intentional or unintentional as long as there is an aspect under which the action is intentional.<sup>24</sup> And in my opinion, this seems to be an analysis that can be reasonably accepted. Furthermore, because pretense is a subset of action in general, it is also possible that episodes of pretense can be either intentional or unintentional. It may turn out that episodes of pretense are exclusively intentional; but, we must look to empirical cases to determine this.<sup>25</sup> As a result, we are able to make our first preliminary distinction between two possible broad categories of pretense. On the one hand, we have intentional pretense which is an action motivated in the right sort of way by one or more guider/motivator pairs—e.g. an agent engages in pretend play because he has both the

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<sup>23</sup> Example taken from Davidson (1963).

<sup>24</sup> From this point forward, I will talk of actions as being intentional or unintentional and so forth. However, I am merely doing this for simplicity's sake. Intentional actions and unintentional actions are simply events under a description. These events are intentional or unintentional in virtue of the description under which they are placed. In essence, an action can only be intentional or unintentional under a description.

<sup>25</sup> Pretense cannot be exclusively unintentional because this would run contrary to Davidson's definition of action. An action cannot be unintentional unless there is a description of that action that makes it intentional.

belief that pretend play will be fun and the desire to have fun.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, we have unintentional pretense which is an action motivated, for the wrong reason or in the wrong sort of way, by one or more guider/motivator pairs. That is, when an agent acts unintentionally, the agent's guider/motivator pairs motivate the action; but, the agent does not completely identify with the action because the guider/motivator pairs do not supply an adequate reason as to why the agent acted in such a fashion.

Let us now consider an example of unintentional pretense to determine if such episodes are possible. Suppose that a mother is motivated to engage in a pretense scenario as a result of both the belief that playing with her child will occupy her daughter enough to keep her out of trouble and the desire to keep her daughter from getting into trouble. In this case, the mother's guider/motivator pair gives her a reason to play with the child, and thus prompts her to play. Further, suppose that, during the course of playing with her child, the mother begins to act like a giraffe (mother mistakenly acts like a giraffe). The mother's action (mistakenly acting like a giraffe) is unintentional, for she had no intention of doing so. It just happens to be the case that engaging in pretend play with her daughter is identical with, or is another description for, acting like a giraffe. Thus, acting like a giraffe is an action attributed to the mother in this instance, albeit an unintentional action. The mother is, thus, unintentionally pretending to be a giraffe. Cases like the one above are analogous to unintentional actions which result in our failing

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<sup>26</sup> By 'right/wrong sort of way', I am simply referring the relationship between the action and the corresponding guider/motivator pair. If the correspondence is 'appropriate', then the action that results from the guider/motivator pair is said to be caused in the 'right sort of way'. For example, if the belief that the cup is full of water coupled with the desire to drink water results in the agent drinking from the cup, drinking from the cup is 'appropriate'. The action is caused in the right sort of way. In contrast, if the belief that the cup is full of water coupled with the desire to drink water results in the agent acting like a pig, acting like a pig is 'inappropriate'. Thus, the action is caused in the 'wrong sort of way'.

to intentionally act in the correct way. Things that we do in an incorrect manner—e.g. pretending to be a giraffe as opposed to pretending to be an elephant—are our unintentional actions because we are “intentionally doing *something*.”<sup>27</sup>

Now, it is probable that there are both intentional and unintentional episodes of pretense. However, I think it is very important to make a further, subtle distinction between certain varieties of action before we begin talking exclusively about pretense. I will term these varieties as *cognitively rich* and *cognitively poor* actions. Actions are cognitively rich to the extent that the agent is aware of (i) the guider/motivator pairs that motivate him to act and (ii) the various descriptions that are true of the action. In other words, the agent understands his reason for acting or at least can give a description of his action that makes the action reasonable (appropriate). For example, suppose Paul eats a piece of pie. Further, suppose that Paul has both the belief that the pie will taste good and a desire to satisfy his palate. This is said to be a cognitively rich action if, for instance, Paul realizes that his action was the result of both his belief that the pie will taste good and his desire to satisfy his palate. In contrast, cognitively poor actions are those in which the agent is unaware of the guider/motivator pairs that motivate him to act or the salient descriptions that are true of the action—e.g. the agent does not understand his reason for acting and cannot give a description of his action that makes the action reasonable (appropriate). Surely we have all engaged in action of the cognitively poor variety. For instance, I am sure that we all have been asked the question, ‘Why did you do that?’ at one time or another. And in many cases, we are unable to provide an answer to the question. This is because we are unaware of the guider/motivator pairs that

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<sup>27</sup> Davidson (1971), p. 6.

prompted our action—i.e. our action is cognitively poor. For a quick example, suppose that Mark sees a hamburger on a stove and eats it. Further, Mark is unaware of what prompted him to eat the hamburger. When asked by a friend why he ate the hamburger, Mark replies, ‘I do not know.’ Of course, Mark could speculate as to why he ate the hamburger; but, in reality, he is unaware of the specific guider/motivator pairs that prompted him to eat the hamburger. Thus, Mark’s action was a cognitively poor action. All in all, it is clear that action can be either cognitively rich or cognitively poor depending on the awareness of the agent.

Given the above analysis of action, we can establish four different varieties of action: intentional and cognitively rich, intentional and cognitively poor, unintentional and cognitively rich, unintentional and cognitively poor. Furthermore, given that these four varieties of action are the only varieties of action and since pretense is a subset of action, it is necessary that all episodes of pretense fall under at least one of the four varieties of action.<sup>28</sup> As a result, we must examine these different varieties of action in an effort to establish which ones include pretense. In other words, we must look at numerous episodes of pretense to determine if pretense comes in one or more varieties. It is perhaps worthy to note that we have already given previous examples of both

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<sup>28</sup> Action comes in four varieties as determined by our analysis of action. Since pretense is an action, pretense must fall under one or more of these varieties. However, it is controversial whether or not pretense falls under *all* of these categories of action. For example, it may be the case that pretense is always intentional and cognitively rich. It is my belief that our analysis of action provides us with an invaluable tool in which to examine these varieties of action in an effort to determine if there are actual episodes of pretense that fall under each variety. That is, our analysis of action provides us with four *possible* varieties of pretense; we must now determine if there are *actual* instantiations of each of the four possible varieties of pretense. With that said, one of the shortcomings to this approach is that the placement of actual instantiations under a variety of pretense is often done by pure intuition because we do not always have access to the guider/motivator pairs which prompt a specific episode of pretense. Thus, we must be careful when subsuming pretense under a variety of action as well as open ourselves to the possibility that there are some varieties of pretense that we would not normally classify as such.

intentional and unintentional episodes of pretense; thus, our findings should be consistent with this fact. Let us now turn our attention to pretense.

It is certain that actions can be both intentional and cognitively rich. However, we want to know if pretense can fall under this variety of action—i.e. that there are intentional, cognitively rich episodes of pretense. The answer is certainly yes. Agents can engage in intentional pretense as well as realize their motivations (guider/motivator pairs) for doing so. For example, a professional actor who performs on stage knows why he is engaging in such action—that is, because of his guiders/motivator pairs. The actor realizes that he has a written script to guide him and a desire to enact the written script. Likewise, a child can engage in pretend play knowing, full-well, her intentions for doing so—namely, the child realizes she has the belief that pretend play will make her happy along with the desire to be happy. So, intentional pretense can undoubtedly be cognitively rich.

Cognitively poor, intentional episodes of pretense, like cognitively rich ones, are very common.<sup>29</sup> For example, suppose that a child, on a whim, points his finger at a sibling and yells, ‘bang, bang,’ from the back seat of his parent’s car. Suppose that this action was motivated by a belief that pointing his finger and yelling, ‘bang bang,’ would scare his sibling as well as the desire to scare his sibling. It is clear that the child has engaged in an episode of pretense—i.e. the child is pretending to shoot his sibling. However, if the child is unaware of his motivations (guider/motivator pairs) for his

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<sup>29</sup> The existence of cognitively poor episodes of pretense seems to run counter to Alan Leslie’s view as espoused in the following: “...pretending that P is not something that simply happens to one, it is something that one undertakes *deliberately*.” See Leslie (2002), p. 112. In context, it seems as if Leslie is suggesting that one always makes a cognitively rich choice to engage in an episode of pretense. However, I reject this view for it seems obvious that many episodes of pretense are enacted without deliberation or awareness. I hope to provide some conclusive examples in the pages that follow.



intentional action, then the action is cognitively poor. And it is possible that the child is unaware. Thus, it is possible for episodes of pretense to fall under the category of intentional, cognitively poor action. To finish our example, when asked about his actions, the child acknowledges that he intended to pretend to shoot his sibling. Furthermore, the child maintains that he is not quite sure of his intentions to do so. The child speculates that his actions could have resulted from either the desire to scare his bother or the desire to act like a bank robber; but, he is just unsure of his true motivations. This case clearly shows that there are intentional, cognitively poor episodes of pretense.

At this point, we have established that pretense can be intentional and cognitively rich or intentional and cognitively poor. However, we still have two varieties of action to look at—i.e. unintentional, cognitively rich and unintentional, cognitively poor—in order to determine if pretense can be subsumed under either of these two varieties of action. Let us first take a look at unintentional, cognitively rich action. Unintentional, cognitively rich actions are episodes of unintentional action in which the agent is able to provide a description of his action that makes the action intentional. In other words, the agent is able to identify the guider/motivator pairs that prompted his action, not because the pairs reasonably (in the right sort of way) prompt the action, but because the guider/motivator pairs reasonably (in the right sort of way) prompt his action when analyzed under a different description. So, for example, suppose that I have a belief that pretending to be a cow is fun. Suppose further that I have the desire to have fun. Thus, I intentionally pretend to be a cow. During this episode of pretense, I begin to realize that I am acting like a steam engine. As a result, I unintentionally pretend to be a steam engine. It is not my intention to pretend that I am a steam engine; but nonetheless, I realize that I

am pretending to be a steam engine because I realize that pretending to be a steam engine is identical with my intentional action of pretending to be a cow. That is, I realize pretending to be a cow is the same action as pretending to be a steam engine, albeit under a different description. Therefore, the action under the description of ‘pretending to be a steam engine’ is unintentional—i.e. it was simply a mistake that resulted from a guider/motivator pair in the wrong sort of way. In addition, I know what guider/motivator pair prompted me to pretend that I was a steam engine—namely, the belief that pretending to be a cow is fun and the desire to have fun. Thus, my unintentional episode of pretense is also cognitively rich because I can track my action back to a guider/motivator pair, although I had to make use of a description to do so. In my opinion, this example clearly shows that pretense can be unintentional and cognitively rich. For those of you who are still skeptical, I would entreat you to hold your reservations until we discuss some additional, more intuitive examples of unintentional, cognitively rich pretense that are soon to follow. In the meantime, let us turn our attention to unintentional, cognitively poor actions.

Unintentional, cognitively poor actions are those in which (i) an agent is motivated, in the wrong sort of way (inappropriately), by guider/motivator pairs and (ii) an agent is unaware of either the guider/motivator pairs that motivate him to act or the salient descriptions that are true of the action. Furthermore, the lack of awareness of guider/motivator pairs is not due to the lack of a guider/motivator pair as would be the case in a mere happening. Nor is the lack of awareness the result of an agent failing to identify his motivations for acting. The lack of awareness is due to the agent’s inability to recognize that his action can be described under an aspect that makes it intentional. In

essence, during an episode of unintentional, cognitively poor action, the agent fails to recognize that one event is identical to another.<sup>30</sup> And thus, agent's engaged in episodes of cognitively poor, unintentional action are unaware of the fact that they are engaged in unintentional action at all. Now, I am fairly confident that a large number of us have been told at some point in our lives, 'you are acting like a \_\_\_\_\_,' where \_\_\_\_\_ represents acting like something you have no knowledge of. As a result, if we are indeed acting like a \_\_\_\_\_, then we are unaware that we are acting like a \_\_\_\_\_. Thus, our acting like a \_\_\_\_\_ is unintentional given the fact that our actions are motivated by some guider/motivator pair. That is, acting like a \_\_\_\_\_ is still an action that is attributed to us although we are epistemically alienated from the guider/motivator pair that prompted us to act like a \_\_\_\_\_. For instance, suppose that we have a guider/motivator pair that prompts us to intentionally pretend that we are elephants. Further, suppose that these actions are identical to pretending to be a large ape; however, we are unaware of this fact. That is, we fail to realize that our intentional pretense is identical to 'pretending to be large apes' under a different description. This positively shows that we can be agents without being aware of our actions. This is an important fact, in my opinion, because it seems that many episodes of pretense occur without the agent's awareness. For instance, we have all, at one point or another, used hand motions while talking to other people—e.g. pretending to talk on the telephone by raising your hand to your ear. And of course, we are often unaware of our hand motions until they are pointed out by our friends. But, surely these actions, at least in certain instances, *really* are episodes of pretense attributed

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<sup>30</sup> The existence of this variety of action is highly speculative. However, I am simply trying to determine whether such actions are possible by determining the characteristics of these actions in the event they are actual.

to the agent rather than just mere happenings. Although we are often unable to pin down the specific guider/motivator pairs at the time of our unintentional episodes of pretense, it does not follow that the guider/motivator pairs do not exist. We are simply epistemically alienated from them at the time. Our unintentional episodes of pretense are cognitively poor when we are epistemically alienated from descriptions that would otherwise make those episodes intentional.

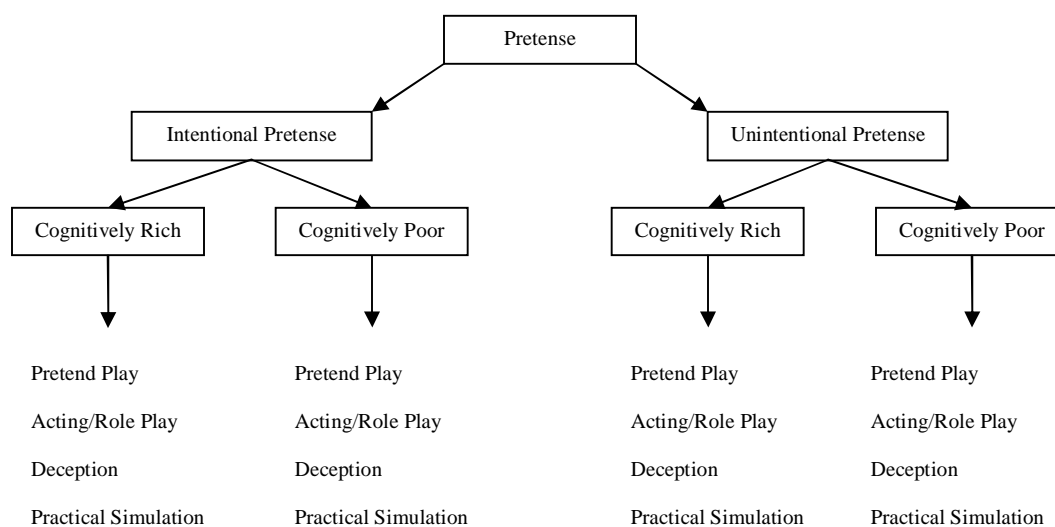
## **ii. Types of Motivation**

I have now clarified four varieties of pretense: intentional and cognitively rich, intentional and cognitively poor, unintentional and cognitively rich, unintentional and cognitively poor. These varieties of pretense arise out of an analysis of action in general, of which pretense is a subset. I now want to move on, however, and analyze pretense from a motivational perspective in an effort to see how specific episodes might fit into these four categories. I think this is an important task because we often recognize that certain types of pretense are often accompanied by the same motivational factors. For example, pretend play often results from the desire to have fun or the desire to be accepted. Adult acting, on the other hand, often results from the desire for fame, for money or simply to enact a written script. It is, of course, important to remember that everyone has different motivations for engaging in pretense—e.g. a person may engage in pretend play as the result of the desire to have fun while another engages in pretend play as the result of a desire to be accepted. In other words, not everyone will engage in pretense for the same reason. Some may even engage in pretense for multiple reasons. With that in mind, my hope here is not to give an exhaustive list of pretense types. I just

want to offer a few broad types of pretense that are commonly motivated by similar guider/motivator pairs.

Figure 1 illustrates some of the broad types of pretense I have in mind: pretend play, acting/role play, deception, practical simulation. It is perhaps worthy to note that these different types of pretense seem to come in multiple varieties as is referenced by the figure. Thus, my intentions are twofold. First, I want to identify some of the common motivations that often accompany each broad type of pretense. Secondly, I want to illustrate just how the various types of pretense fit into a specific variety of pretense. I will begin with the most obvious form of pretense—pretend play.

**Figure 1:** *Schematic of the broad categories of pretense demarcated roughly along motivational lines*



Pretend play is seemingly the most obvious type of pretense as is referenced by its, almost exclusive, role as the paradigm example of pretense in the literature. And since pretend play provides a significant developmental advantage during early childhood, it is no surprise that episodes of pretend play are most often observed in

children. However, we do occasionally observe pretend play in adults as the result of wanting to interact with a child who is engaged in a pretend scenario. But we rarely see adults engage in pretend play alone, for pretend play in adults is quite rare.<sup>31</sup> So, it is likely that we all engage in pretend play at some point in our lives; but, what exactly is pretend play? Pretend play is an action that does not entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality. However, this alone does not capture the definition of pretend play because any episode of pretense could fit this definition. The reason we categorize pretend play as such is because (i) the act results from certain, specific guider/motivator pairs (intentional pretense) or (ii) the act is mistakenly thought to have been motivated by these certain, specific guider/motivator pairs (unintentional pretense), for there exists an intentional description of the action that is motivated by such pairs. So, pretend play is an action that does not entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality which results, or is mistakenly thought to result, from certain, specific guider/motivator pairs. What could these pairs be? Well, I am not looking to give a rigorous definition of play; but, it seems that most intentional playing is accompanied by a desire for fun or pleasure. Unintentional pretend play, on the other hand, is often motivated by very different guider/motivator pairs—e.g. the desire to be included in a group. The reason we often classify unintentional pretend play as pretend play is because we realize that the unintentional actions of the agent can be described as an intentional action that results from guider/motivator pairs that are usually associated with pretend play.

At this point, I would like to give an example which illustrates how various acts of pretend play are classified under the various categories of pretense. Suppose three

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<sup>31</sup> Suggested by Carruthers (2006a) and Nichols and Stich (2003).

children, two of whom possess the concept of pretense, engage in an episode of pretend play. Of the two children who possess the concept of pretense, one child is motivated to act by a desire to have fun coupled with the belief that pretending (enacting a specific, possible world script) will be fun while the other acts out of a desire to be accepted by the other children coupled with the belief that interacting with the other children (enacting a specific, possible world script) will gain their acceptance.<sup>32</sup> The child who acts out of the desire to have fun is engaging in an intentional episode of pretend play whether or not he is aware of his motivations. On the other hand, the child who acts out of a desire to be accepted is engaging in an unintentional episode of pretend play because it was not his intention to engage in pretend play—i.e. there is no desire to have fun. However, the child identifies with his action of pretend play because he realizes that his episode of pretend play can be described in an aspect that makes it intentional—i.e. intentional pretending. Thus, the unintentional episode of pretend play is cognitively rich. Now, the same child may not have identified with his episode of pretend play at the time it was going on. Perhaps the identification came at a latter point. In other words, at the time of the action, the child did not realize he was engaged in an episode of pretend play because he failed to connect his concepts correctly which would have facilitated the recognition that both an intentional description and an unintentional description described the same event. In this case, the unintentional pretense is said to be cognitively poor. To illustrate this point a little more, let us take a look at the child who does not possess the concept of pretense. Suppose this child is motivated by the desire to be accepted and the belief that

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<sup>32</sup> In the philosophy of action, ‘possible world script’ is often used as technical term which refers to a set of cognitive suppositions or representations that are contained in the suppositional reasoning module (i.e. the possible world box) of the human brain that can potentially instruct or guide a pretender acting on certain desires. The cognitive scripts are analogous to written scripts; they help guide action.

mimicking the other children will allow her to gain their acceptance. In this case, the child is guided by a representation, ‘I am so-and-so’, that is not representative of her perceived reality. So, the child is intentionally pretending while unintentionally engaging in pretend play. However, because the child is epistemically alienated from the fact that her pretending is identical to an episode of pretend play (enacting a specific, possible world script for fun) due to the fact that she lacks the concept of pretense, she is unaware of her pretense.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, the girl is engaging in unintentional pretend play because there is an intentional description of her action that results from guider/motivator pairs that are characteristic of pretend play, although she is unaware of any such a description. She just may have to acquire the concept of pretense before the realization can be made. Unintentional pretense of this sort is said to be cognitively poor.<sup>34</sup> It is important to note that examples of cognitively poor, unintentional episodes of pretense like the one given above provide a good illustration as to how an agent can pretend without possessing the concept of pretense.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, it should now be clear that pretend play can be

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<sup>33</sup> It must be noted, if the child was aware that she was engaging in pretend play (i.e. that her pretending was identical to pretend play), her pretend play would still be unintentional (though cognitively rich) given the specific guider/motivator pair that prompted her action in the example. The child’s unintentional episode of pretend play would have been intentional in this example only if the guider/motivator pairs that prompted the action were characteristic of pretend play, which they were not.

<sup>34</sup> For an agent to engage in an unintentional, cognitively poor episode of pretense, it is not necessary that the agent fails to possess the concept of pretense. For instance, it could be the case that an agent possesses the concept of pretense but is simply unaware of the fact that his unintentional pretense can be described under an aspect that makes it intentional. In essence, it may be the case that the agent fails to connect his concepts in the proper way resulting in his failure to realize that two pretense descriptions (one intentional and one unintentional) describe the same event.

<sup>35</sup> It seems plausible to suppose that much of the pretense observed in very early childhood occurs without the concept of pretense. See Berguno and Dermot Bowler (2004) and Nichols and Stich (2003) among others. That is, many episodes of pretense, or even episodes of action in general, that are performed by young children are very behavioristic, as opposed to mentalistic. As a result, in many instances, young children are not motivated by the desire to pretend (or the desire to enact certain possible world scenarios). They are simply motivated to pretend, for example, by the desire for pleasure, the desire for practical reward, or the desire to behave in a specific way coupled with beliefs about behavior that would satisfy these desires. Furthermore, it should not be surprising that episodes of pretense that are enacted, without



intentional and cognitively rich, intentional and cognitively poor, unintentional and cognitively rich, or unintentional and cognitively poor.

Acting/role play is a very similar type of pretense which often significantly overlaps with pretend play. When we think of acting/role play, we often associate it with the performing arts—that is, adults engaging in pretense on stage in an effort to entertain an audience. However, a child’s pretend play is often a form of acting/role play. In fact, in some instances pretend play is identical with episodes of acting/role play—i.e. engaging in acting/role play for fun. Children engaged in pretend play are often simultaneously involved in the desired action of ‘acting out’ a script.<sup>36</sup> In these cases, there are many possibilities as to what the child is *actually* doing. It could be the case that the child is being motivated by multiple guider/motivator pairs, particularly the ones

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the agent possessing the concept of pretense, come in many varieties. For example, an agent can engage in a cognitively rich, intentional episode of pretense without possessing the concept of pretense. The agent may, for instance, simply engage in behavior that is characteristic of pretend play because she has the desire for pleasure coupled with the belief that such behavior results in pleasure. Possession of the concept of pretense is not necessary for the agent to engage in this type of pretense. Likewise, engagements in intentional episodes of pretense that are cognitively poor do not require that the acting agents possess the concept of pretense. Thus, if an agent engages in an intentional episode of pretense, the agent may or may not possess the concept of pretense. This is true of unintentional episodes of pretense as well. For example, suppose an agent engages in a cognitively poor, unintentional episode of pretend play (without the concept of pretense) as the result of the desire for money and the belief that certain behaviors will result in the acquisition of money. The agent, in this case, is unaware of her unintentional pretend play; hence, it is a cognitively poor episode. However, the agent’s unintentional pretend play is identical to her intentional money seeking behavior. It is my conjecture that the agent in this case fails to make this realization because she either lacks the adequate concepts (namely, the concept of pretense) as is the case in this example or fails to adequately connect her concepts. Cognitively rich, unintentional episodes of pretense which are enacted without the concept of pretense are a bit trickier to explain. For instance, suppose that the above case were a cognitively rich, unintentional episode. That is, the agent realizes that her unintentional pretend play is identical to her intentional money seeking behavior. In order for an agent to enact this type of episode without the concept of pretense, the agent must be able to connect the two descriptions for her action without making use of the concept of pretense. Consequently, she must realize that her unintentional behavior of such and such a sort (unintentional pretend play) is identical to her money seeking behavior (intentional pretense). It should now be clear that unintentional episode of pretense, as well as intentional ones, can be enacted without the agent possessing the concept of pretense.

<sup>36</sup> A ‘script’ in the philosophy of action is a loose paradigm for how an action is supposed to unfold. Scripts can be physical, such as a written script or screenplay. Or, scripts can be cognitive, such as a set of possible world suppositions or an imagining.

that are characteristic of both pretend play and acting/role play. In this case, the child is intentionally engaging in both acting/role play and pretend play. On the other hand, it could be the case that the motivation comes specifically from the guider/motivator pair that is characteristic of acting/role play. If this is the case, the child is intentionally engaging in acting/role play while unintentionally engaging in pretend play. Observers, in this instance, would perhaps classify the child's unintentional pretend play as intentional because it looks as if the child's actions, from an internal perspective, could be motivated by the guider/motivator pair that is characteristic of pretend play. We must be careful when we classify cases of pretense into motivational types because we often do not have access to the actual guiders and motivators that prompt the agent's action. The example provided above shows that our actions, whatever they may be, are determined by the specific guider/motivator pairs that prompt the action. Consequently, these broad types are not mutually exclusive. I am simply trying to break apart the various types of pretense along broad motivational lines.

Although acting/role play may, in some cases, be motivated by such a guider/motivator pair (one characteristic of pretend play), it is my contention that such a pair is not necessary for an agent to engage in acting/role play. Thus, we should characterize acting/role play. Acting/role play, as opposed to other types of pretense, commonly involves the 'acting out' of a script, whether the script is a screenplay, an imagined scenario or something similar.<sup>37</sup> Thus, we usually identify acting/role play as

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<sup>37</sup> As suggested, a script may not always be physical. Some scripts are cognitive (e.g. imagination). Scripts are simply loose paradigms or guiders for action. And cognitive scripts, such as the imagination or a set of beliefs, often guide our action.

an episode of pretense that is guided by a script and motivated by a corresponding desire to enact that script.<sup>38</sup> Let us quickly take a look at a few brief examples.

Intentional acting/role play is characterized by a script (beliefs, imaginings, and screenplays, among other things) which guides the action and a desire to enact a script which provides the thrust for the action. Keeping this in mind, a child who acts out a pretend scenario (possible world script) because of his single desire to enact the script, whether or not the child is aware of his motivations, is said to be intentionally engaging in an episode of acting/role play while perhaps unintentionally engaging in pretend play, so long as the unintentional pretend play can be described under an aspect that makes it intentional.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, a child who acts out a pretend scenario as the result of both the belief that pretending (enacting a possible world script) will be fun and the desire to receive pleasure is said to be intentionally engaging in pretend play as well as perhaps acting/role play, depending on whether the desire to enact the pretend scenario is contained within the initial guider/motivator pair. If it is not contained within the initial guider/motivator pair, the acting/role play is unintentional as per our definition of acting/role play. Like pretend play, acting/role play can be an unintentional action of either the cognitively rich or cognitively poor variety.

A further, and far less noticed, type of pretense is deception. When we deceive others, we are pretending that a certain state of affairs is the case when, in actuality, it

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<sup>38</sup> Acting/role play is very similar to pretend play. However, there is a subtle difference. An episode of pretend play is identical to an episode of acting/role play if the episode of pretend play is at least motivated by the desire to enact a script which is believed to be fun. An episode of acting/role play is identical to an episode of pretend play if the episode of acting/role play is at least guided by the belief that a certain script is fun as well as the desire to have fun.

<sup>39</sup> The child's pretend play is unintentional because the child neither has the belief that enacting the possible world script will be fun nor the desire to have fun.

does not entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality. During a deceptive episode of pretense we often engage in actions that corroborate the state of affairs we are trying to advance. For example, if we deceive someone into believing that we are unmarried, our actions will reflect that false state of affairs. In essence, we will be pretending that we are not married—e.g. we may go out with single women or we may take off our wedding ring. I would not be surprised if a good number of episodes of pretense in adults fall under this type of pretense. With that said, it would be prudent to determine a guider/motivator pair that is exclusive to episodes of deceptive pretense. In looking for an answer, we must first notice that deception is very similar to acting/role play in the sense that a script seemingly guides deceptive pretense. So, it seems that many episodes of deception have the characteristic of having some possible world scenario (script) as a guider and a desire to act out that possible world scenario (script) as a motivator. Obviously, more is needed here because, as it stands, deception and acting/role play are motivated by the same guider/motivator pair. So, what differentiates the two actions? It is my contention that deceptive pretense is motivated by a belief that a certain possible world scenario (script) is deceptive, a possible world scenario (script) that is believed to be deceptive and a desire to deceive. Thus, the guiders, in cases of deception, are scripts coupled with a deceptive belief about these scripts. As we can now see, deception is very closely related to acting/role play.<sup>40</sup>

Let us take a look at a couple of examples of deception in order to differentiate intentional deception from unintentional deception. Suppose that a married man has the

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<sup>40</sup> An episode of deception is identical to an episode of acting/role play if the episode of deception is at least motivated by the desire to enact a deceptive script. An episode of acting/role play is identical to an episode of deception if the episode of acting/role play is at least guided by the belief that a certain script is deceptive as well as the desire to deceive.

belief that a script (pretending to be unmarried) is deceptive. Further, suppose that he has the desire to be deceptive. Thus, he acts out the script (pretending to be unmarried). In this case, the man is intentionally engaging in deception. It can also be said that the man is intentionally engaging in an episode of acting/role play, assuming that desire to enact the deceptive script is contained within the agent's guider/motivator pair. Otherwise, the acting/role play is unintentional, and most likely, cognitively rich. Deception can also be unintentional and cognitively poor. Suppose, for instance, that the married man had no belief that the script (pretending to be married) was deceptive. For example, the man is enacting the script (pretending to be married) in an effort to practice for a play. In this case, he is engaging in intentional acting/role play because he has the desire to enact the script (pretending to be married). However, he is also engaging in unintentional, cognitively poor deception because witnesses, who think he is married, are deceived into thinking that he is not. Thus, the married man unintentionally deceives the witnesses because his unintentional deception can be described under an aspect that makes it intentional, although he is unaware of this intentional description. I believe these examples will suffice for now. At present, I would like to move on to the final type of pretense—i.e. practical simulation.

Practical simulation is very similar to deception in the sense that we usually do not associate it as a form of pretense as it is often very subtle. Practical simulation, too, is an action that often results from a desire to act out a script. But what is the characteristic that sets practical simulation apart from deception or acting/role play in general? When we engage in practical simulation, we act out a script that does not entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality for the purpose of gaining some

practical edge. We can take an example from the previous chapter to illustrate this. Suppose that an agent, who had no experience with carpentry or of hammering nails into wood, was asked by his friend to nail a couple of boards together. The agent, of course, needs instructions on how to do so. Thus, the agent's friend proceeds to instruct the agent on the procedure by using hand gestures for he does not have access to his actual hammer, nails and boards at the present moment. The hand gestures are important because they aide the agent's friend in relaying valuable information to the agent. The agent's friend is pretending to hold a hammer and a nail in an effort to instruct the agent. It seems that episodes of practical simulation are characterized by desires for practical advantages coupled with beliefs about scripts which are believed to offer practical advantages. The agent's friend was motivated to engage in practical simulation because of a certain possible world script believed to provide a practical advantage and a desire for that particular advantage.

Practical simulation, like the other types of pretense, can be unintentional. Suppose, for instance, that a child raises her hand to her ear during an episode of pretend play. The child does so because she is motivated by the desire for pleasure and the belief that engaging in an episode of pretend play will provide that pleasure. An intentional episode of pretend play ensues. It is clear that this child, who is intentionally engaging in pretend play, is also unintentionally engaging in an episode of practical simulation because the child's unintentional practical simulation, 'simulating how to use a phone,' can be described in such a way as to make the action intentional. In this specific case, the child is probably unaware of the identity relation between her episode of pretend play and episode of practical simulation. If this is the case, then the unintentional pretense is

cognitively poor. These, and other, examples of practical simulation seem to demonstrate that this type of pretense is quite common in both children and adults alike.

I have now laid out some broad types of pretense roughly demarcated by the motivations that underlie them: pretend play, acting/role play, deception, practical simulation. Of course, the list is not exhaustive and there is much overlap. Further, it is unclear just how much overlap there really is.<sup>41</sup> However, I have provided some good working definitions for the broad motivational types.

Pretend Play: Pretense that is guided by a script that is believed to provide pleasure and motivated by the desire for pleasure.

Acting/Role Play: Pretense that is guided by a script and motivated by a desire to enact the script.

Deception: Pretense that is guided by a script which is believed to be deceptive and motivated by the desire to deceive.

Practical Simulation: Pretense that is guided by a script that is believed to provide a practical advantage and motivated by the desire to receive a practical advantage.

At present, I would like to move on to present a number of specific pretense episodes that fall under these broad types of pretense. In providing these cases, my hope is to give a good representative selection of pretense episodes in general as opposed to providing only episodes which involve pretend play as is customary in the literature. It is my firm belief that we must look at pretense in general, rather than a subset thereof, if we are going to discover any real answers to the motivation question. Thus, the following cases will deal with both pretend play as well as other forms of more general pretense.

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<sup>41</sup> In some sense, it seems that acting/role play can be elevated to the paradigm example among episodes of pretense, rather than pretend play, because each broad motivational type of pretense can be looked at as a subset of acting/role play, assuming that the guider/motivator pairs in each case presuppose the desire to enact the script. In other words, assuming the presupposition, pretend play, deception, and practical simulation are episodes of acting/role play that result from specific kind of desires: the desire to have fun, the desire to deceive and the desire to receive a practical advantage, respectively. However, it is highly controversial whether this presupposition can be granted; and, it is my contention that it cannot.

## **i. The Cases**

### **Case 1: *The Adult's Acting Career***

Samantha belongs to a prestigious repertory theater and she has made it her life's work to promote herself in the theater industry. She usually plays the lead female role in all of the theater's productions. Once a month, Samantha completely immerses herself in a role as she takes the stage for an amazing night of pretense and entertainment. She rarely forgets her lines and she acts out her script in its entirety making sure to correctly interact with her colleagues, the stage and the provided props. As a matter of fact, she gave a flawless performance last weekend as she took on the role of Amanda Fowler, a female serial killer from Savannah, Georgia. After the performance, she told reporters that it was often difficult at times to pretend to be such a psychotic and villainous character. "It will often mess with your mind," she stated, "until you can remember that you are only pretending. To be a good actress, however, you have to immerse yourself in the fantasy land you are portraying. You have to become the villain". Despite the emotional hazards of the job, Samantha also told local reporters that she could never have asked for a better job to support her family, as she earns a nice living and receives a lot of time off work during the summer months.

Possible guider/motivator pairs:

1. Guider: written scripts; belief that enacting certain written scripts is a superb way to support one's family.  
 Motivator: desire to support one's family.  
 Pretense classification: cognitively rich, intentional practical simulation; cognitively rich, unintentional acting/role play; cognitively poor, unintentional deception and so on.
2. Guider: written scripts.  
 Motivator: desire to perform certain written scripts.  
 Pretense classification: cognitively rich, intentional acting/role play; cognitively rich, unintentional practical simulation; cognitively rich, unintentional pretend play and so on.



*Case 2: The Hold Up*

Paul is a very psychotic and disturbed individual. In his free time, Paul likes to play practical jokes on random passersby. Three days ago, he happened upon a loaded gun down by one of the numerous creeks in his hometown. To say the least, Paul had an idea. He was going to point the loaded gun at random people in an effort to scare them. His first target was a six-year-old boy who was walking home from school alone. He pointed the gun at the little boy and shouted, “Stop or I will kill you where you stand!” The frightened boy looked up with fear in his eyes. He began to sob. Paul then yelled at the boy, “You better start pretending that you donkey or I will kill you!” The young boy reluctantly complied—i.e. he halfheartedly got on his hands and knees and started making donkey noises. Paul, in turn, began laughing uncontrollably at the young boy. Paul then ran off leaving the young boy both scared and ashamed. This episode of pretense seems to illustrate that we are capable of engaging in pretense although we do not want to do so.

Possible guider/motivator pairs:

1. Guider: possible world donkey script; belief that enacting possible world donkey script will result in saving one’s life.  
 Motivator: desire to live.  
 Pretense classification: cognitively rich, intentional practical simulation; cognitively rich, unintentional acting/role play; cognitively poor, unintentional pretend play and so on.
2. Guider: possible world donkey script; belief that enacting possible world donkey script will result in saving one’s life.  
 Motivator: desire to live; desire to perform possible world donkey script.  
 Pretense classification: cognitively rich, intentional acting/role play; cognitively rich, intentional practical simulation; cognitively poor, unintentional deception and so on.

*Case 3: The Baseball Swing*

Thomas is an avid baseball fan. Every weekend, he invites his friends over for a nice little get together in which he and his friends eat various finger foods while enjoying

a select baseball game. During one such weekend, Thomas' favorite player smashed a grand-slam home run in the bottom of the ninth inning to win the game. As Thomas saw the home run on his fifty inch plasma television, he jumped out of his chair and made a swinging motion with an imaginary bat, apparently in celebration. He, in essence, pretended to be his favorite player by enacting the home run swing. Thomas' wife thought this behavior was sort of strange so she asked Thomas, "Why did you jump out of your chair and take a swing?" Thomas replied, "What?" Thomas looked genuinely puzzled. He had not realized what he had done. He thought about it for a few more seconds and only then did he realize that he indeed took a swing. But, he was unable to give his wife a satisfactory answer as to his motivations for doing so. He remarked, "Now that I think about it, I did take a swing. It must have been the excitement. It was an impulse." I am sure we have all found ourselves in Thomas' position—i.e. we have all done things that we do not realize we are doing. In Thomas' case, he enacted a pretend scenario without realizing it.

Possible guider/motivator pairs:

1. Guider: belief that a random bodily movement is a way to celebrate.  
 Motivator: desire to celebrate.  
 Pretense classification: cognitively poor, unintentional acting/role play; cognitively poor, unintentional practical simulation; cognitively poor, unintentional pretend play and so on.
2. Guider: possible world baseball player script.  
 Motivator: desire to enact possible world baseball player script.  
 Pretense classification: cognitively poor, intentional acting/role play; cognitively poor, unintentional practical simulation; cognitively poor, unintentional pretend play and so on.
3. Guider: possible world baseball player script; belief that possible world baseball player script will provide celebration.  
 Motivator: desire to celebrate.  
 Pretense classification: cognitively poor, intentional practical simulation; cognitively poor, unintentional acting/role play; cognitively poor, unintentional pretend play and so on.

**Case 4:** *The Act of Deception*

Robert is a thirty-year-old single bachelor, living in Tempe, Arizona. On one fateful day two months ago, Robert invited his friend, Michael, over for a few drinks. As the night wore on, both Robert and Michael became highly intoxicated. At some point, there was a verbal disagreement between the two friends and a physical altercation ensued. During this altercation, Robert ended up killing his friend Michael with a large steak knife. The next morning, as Robert regained his senses, the severity of his actions started to weigh heavily on his mind. He decided he would dump the body, dispose of the evidence (murder weapon), clean the crime scene and pretend the fateful events had never occurred. A few days later, Michael's wife contacted police and told them that her husband was missing. She stated, "Michael went over to Robert's house a few days ago to spend the night, and he has not returned. I have not heard from him since and I am getting a little worried." A few hours later, a few officers from the Tempe, Arizona police department were on the doorstep of Robert's home enquiring into the whereabouts of his best friend Michael. Robert, told the investigators that Michael did indeed come over for a few drinks a couple of nights ago; but, he recalled that Michael had left his house quite early that night after receiving, what seemed to be, an urgent phone call. Robert stated that he had not heard from his friend since the early departure. Police feared the worst. Within hours, search parties were scouring through Robert's neighborhood in hopes of finding any evidence that would point towards the whereabouts of Michael. Robert, too, was involved in the search though his actions during the search were none other than those of pretense—i.e. his actions did not entirely reflect his perceived state of affairs. If Robert's actions conformed to his perceived reality, he

would have confessed immediately. Instead, Robert only pretended to be genuinely concerned by offering the occasional worried glare as well as intermittent sobs of sadness. He only pretended to diligently search for his friend by frequently overturning piles of garbage in an effort to locate Michael. When around officials or Michael's family and friends, Robert would even pretend that he was genuinely heartbroken and make heartfelt comments to Michael's loved ones. All the while, Robert felt no remorse for his actions. He knew exactly where Michael's body could be found and was never going to give up the incriminating secret.<sup>42</sup>

Possible guider/motivator pairs:

1. Guider: possible world script; belief that the possible world script is deceptive.  
Motivator: desire to deceive.  
Pretense classification: cognitively rich, intentional deception; cognitively rich, unintentional acting/role play; cognitively poor, unintentional pretend play and so on.
2. Guider: possible world script; belief that the possible world script is deceptive.  
Motivator: desire to deceive; desire to enact possible world script.  
Pretense classification: cognitively rich, intentional acting/role play; cognitively rich, intentional deception; cognitively poor, unintentional pretend play and so on.

### **Case 5: *The War Game***<sup>43</sup>

Walter is an adolescent male who loves to enact war games with the use of his paintball gun. He and his friends usually participate in these war games on a weekly basis in some random patch of woods. During one of these sessions, an onlooker would reasonably be expected to see these boys wielding toy guns that spray paint, as well as stalking and military style behavior. The games are so realistic that it is perhaps even possible that onlookers mistake the war games for actual fights. Participants in the games

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<sup>42</sup> It is important to note that we engage in pretense every time we lie, for lying is none other than an action that does not entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality. The above case involves an adult engaged in deceptive pretense; however, I do not believe it would be a difficult task to envision a case in which a child engages in a deceptive episode of pretense whether it is contained within an episode of pretend play or not.

<sup>43</sup> Inspired by Currie and Ravenscroft (2002), pp. 119-123.

often imagine that they are soldiers in a battlefield and often engage in actions (pretense) that would be appropriate to this imagining. For example, if a participant is shot, they may fall down and act as if they are hurt. On three consecutive days, Walter participated in a war game. The following guider/motivator pairs chronicle the motivations behind his actions on each day, respectively.

Possible guider/motivator pairs:

1. Guider: belief that shooting one's friend with a toy gun will result in the friend being sprayed with paint.  
 Motivator: desire to spray paint on one's friend.  
 Pretense classification: cognitively rich, unintentional pretend play; cognitively rich, unintentional acting/role play; cognitively poor, unintentional deception and so on.
2. Guider: possible world script; belief that the possible world script provides a way to have fun.  
 Motivator: desire to have fun.  
 Pretense classification: cognitively rich, intentional pretend play; cognitively rich, unintentional practical simulation; cognitively rich, unintentional acting/role play and so on.
3. Guider: possible world script; belief that possible world script provides a way to have fun.  
 Motivator: desire to have fun; desire to enact possible world script.  
 Pretense classification: cognitively rich, intentional acting/role play; cognitively rich, intentional pretend play; cognitively rich, unintentional practical simulation and so on.

### **Case 6: *The Police Investigator***

Eric has worked with profiling the criminal mind his whole life. He currently holds a senior position in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's behavioral sciences division and has successfully profiled at least a dozen of the most prolific serial killers in the United States over the past three decades. To say the least, Eric is an expert at entering the criminal mind. "To understand the criminal mind," Eric claims, "you have to become the criminal. You have to put yourself in their shoes, and walk their path. Essentially, you have to pretend that *you* are *them*. Only then will you be able to visit the dark and dangerous hollows of the criminal mind." At a typical crime scene, Eric will

immerse himself in the gruesome environment and retrace the possible steps of the killer. Essentially, he will enact possible scenarios that could have been performed by the killer in an effort to determine just how the actual crime could have taken place. For example, Eric might pretend he is the killer by crawling through a window in an effort to see how the killer's actions affected the crime scene. Eric may even pretend to stab the victim by making stabbing motions over the body of the victim in an effort to determine if the blood spatter is consistent with a knife attack. In essence, Eric re-enacts the crime to gain valuable insight into the physical details of the crime. All the while, Eric is also trying to psychologically pretend he is the killer in an effort to ascertain certain criminal behavior patterns or perhaps even a motive. In essence, Eric is behaving as if he were the criminal.

Possible guider/motivator pairs:

1. Guider: belief that making certain movements will result in capturing a criminal.  
 Motivator: desire to catch the criminal  
 Pretense classification: cognitively rich, unintentional practical simulation; cognitively rich, unintentional acting/role play; cognitively poor, unintentional pretend play and so on.
2. Guider: possible world script; belief that the possible world script provides a way to catch a criminal.  
 Motivator: desire to catch a criminal; desire to enact possible world script.  
 Pretense classification: cognitively rich, intentional practical simulation; cognitively rich, intentional acting/role play; cognitively rich, unintentional pretend play and so on.

Now, it is clear that the above cases fit the definition of pretense given in chapter one. Furthermore, these cases of pretense can be subsumed under a specific variety of pretense depending on both the specific guider/motivator pairs that prompt each episode and the descriptions under which the episodes are described. We should all accept that the above cases of pretense are, at the very least, possible. And if they are possible, then any theory of motivation will have to account for these cases. In the following chapter, I

would like to explore each of the proximate (singular account) theories of motivation in an effort to determine if they do indeed properly classify the above cases of pretense correctly. It is my contention that the proximate (singular account) theories of motivation that we find in the literature, as we shall see, fail to do as such. Thus, we must conclude that they are, at best, incomplete theories of motivation.

### III. Theories of Motivation

In the previous chapter, a number of cases of pretense were offered; and, these cases span the gamut of pretense varieties as well as motivational types. The realization that pretense is an extensive and far-reaching subset of action is paramount to the task of determining the motivations which underlie the various episodes of pretense. That is, we must truly understand pretense before we are able to offer any successful theories concerning the motivations which underlie this kind of action. In my opinion, this is where many of the theories found in the literature fail. For one, we rarely find rigorous definitions of pretense in the literature; and if we do, they are often simply definitions for pretend play disguised as definitions for pretense.<sup>44</sup> Secondly, we are often bombarded with a wide variety of episodes of pretend play in children and are expected to agree that these episodes are representative of pretense in general. As a result, the corresponding theories of motivation are largely built up around one aspect, or type, of pretense resulting in both the neglect for the diversity found in pretense and the continued acceptance of incomplete theories of motivation underlying pretense. Thus, we must be careful when offering a theory of motivation.

With that said, it is my contention that the various proximate (singular account) theories of motivation found in the literature—Peter Curruthers’ action-based (emotional reward) theory of motivation; Shaun Nichols and Stephen Stich’s thought-based (counterfactual) theory of motivation; and David Velleman’s ‘*i-belief*’ and ‘*i-desire*’ theory of

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<sup>44</sup> Lillard (2002a) provides, from what I have come across, one of the best rigorous definitions for pretense although some of its tenets, in my opinion, seem to be flawed.

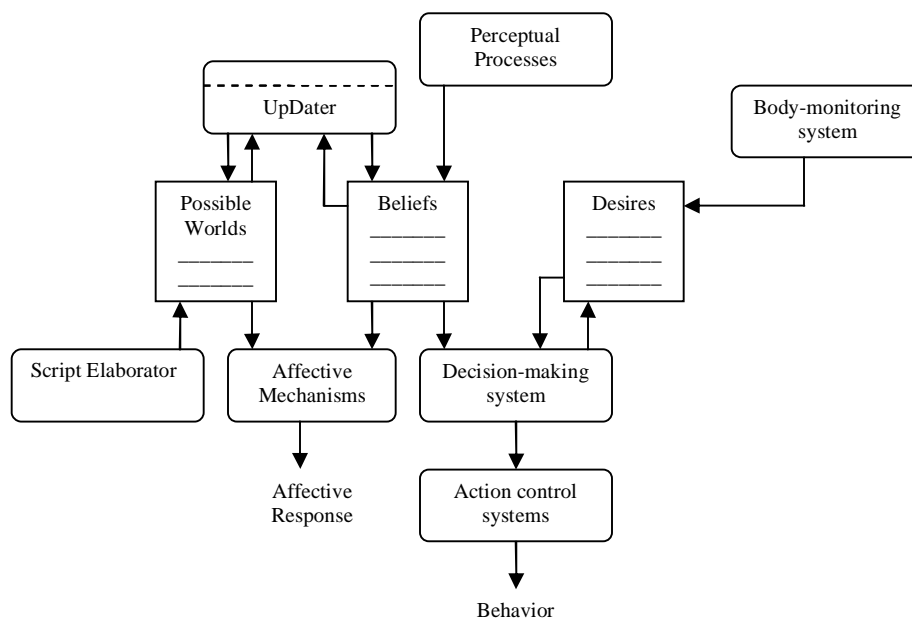


motivation—fall short of offering a complete theory of motivation for pretense. In this chapter, my hope is to examine each of these theories, in turn, in an effort to show that they are indeed incomplete theories of motivation. To do this, I will illustrate how each theory fails to classify at least one of the cases of pretense presented in chapter two as an episode of pretense. If these theories cannot successfully categorize clear cases of pretense as such, then they are either incomplete theories or wholly unsuccessful theories of motivation. I would like to begin our examination with Nichols and Stich's thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation.

#### **i. Shaun Nichols and Stephen Stich and the Possible World Box**

In their book, *Mindreading: An Integrated Account of Pretence, Self-Awareness, and Understanding Other Minds* (2003), Shaun Nichols and Stephen Stich offer a theory of motivation as well as provide a sketch of the cognitive architecture that underlies human pretense. The cognitive architecture has been favorably received by many scholars in the field. Consequently, I would like to begin by examining this architecture in an effort to understand just how Nichols and Stich's thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation fits with this architecture. Understanding this cognitive architecture will place us in a better position to evaluate this theory of motivation. The following diagram illustrates the cognitive modules that Nichols and Stich believe are required for engaging in pretense.

**Figure 2:** *Nichols and Stich's proposed cognitive architecture for pretense*<sup>45</sup>



As we can see in the figure, our beliefs/desire pairs are, for the most part, responsible for the motivation behind our actions. So, when we act, we do so as the result of certain belief/desire pairs. For example, an agent who believes that there is a beer in the refrigerator and desires a beer will be inclined to get off his recliner and retrieve the beer from the refrigerator. Now, the agent's entire belief set is said to be representative of his perceived reality—i.e. a script that guides actions which entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality. As a result, actions guided by an agent's belief set and motivated by an agent's desires always entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality. In other words, when an agent is guided by his beliefs, his actions match up with, or are representative of, his perceived reality. So, how are we to account for pretense—i.e. actions that do not entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality?

<sup>45</sup> Nichols and Stich (2003); Nichols (2004).

We need something more than an agent's perceived reality (or belief set) guiding action if pretense does in fact occur. We need a guide (a representation) that does not reflect, or is not representative of, an agent's perceived reality. According to Nichols and Stich, the human ability to reason counter-factually (to entertain possible world scenarios) provides just such a guide. That is, humans have a distinctive cognitive architecture that provides them with the unique ability to move beyond their perceived reality into a possible world reality. In other words, humans have the ability to engage in actions that are guided by representations (possible world suppositions) that are not representative of their perceived reality, resulting in actions that do not entirely match up with their perceived reality. Once a possible world is entertained, an agent is able to perform actions that are guided by this possible world supposition, thus engaging in an episode of pretense. As a result, the ability to entertain possible world scenarios (or more specifically, representations that are not representative of an agent's perceived reality) plays an essential role in motivating pretense—i.e. action that does not entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality.<sup>46</sup>

Let us take a look at how pretense works on this model.

First, a novel supposition, originating in the script elaborator, is placed in the possible world box. 'I am a cat' could be an example of just such a supposition. The supposition is then elaborated by one's inference mechanisms as well as one's existing beliefs. So for example, my belief that 'cats have four legs and can make cat noises' elaborates the supposition that 'I am a cat'. Further, my inference mechanisms tell me

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<sup>46</sup> On Nichols and Stich's model, our actions are motivated by guider/motivator pairs. When our beliefs alone guide action, our actions conform to the bounds of perceived reality. However, when possible world scenarios (possible world scripts) guide action, our actions are episodes of pretense because they do not conform to the bounds of perceived reality. Pretense requires the cognitive ability to entertain representations (possible world scenarios) that are not representative of the agent's perceived reality. In a sense, it requires imagining possible scenarios.

that if ‘I am a cat with four legs’, then ‘I am a cat that can walk’. The supposition that ‘I am a walking cat with four legs and can make cat noises’ is now contained within the possible world box. Beliefs that are inconsistent with one’s suppositions in the possible world box are filtered out by the UpDater. This process resolves any contradictions (or blurring of the lines) between the possible world box and the belief box—i.e., it keeps the boxes separate. So for instance, my belief that ‘I am not a cat’ is filtered out and does not enter into the possible world box. And of course, the script elaborator could also add additional suppositions to the possible world box such as ‘I am green’. This would lead to another iteration of the process just described—i.e., this supposition would be added to the possible world box and then elaborated and combined with our non-contradictory beliefs, our inferences, and our existing possible world suppositions. In the end, we have a possible world script (that is not representative of an agent’s perceived reality) residing in the possible world box that can act as a guide for our action. So, what motivates us to engage in episodes of pretense, or enact these possible world scripts? Nichols and Stich claim that, “Pretenders behave the way they do because they *want to behave in a way that is similar to the way some character or object behaves in the possible world whose description is contained in the Possible World Box.*”<sup>47</sup> Thus, we engage in pretense because we have the desire to enact scripts contained within our possible world box coupled with a possible world script.

Nichols and Stich’s thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation: an agent engaged in an episode of pretense is essentially motivated by the desire to enact a possible world script that is contained within the agent’s possible world box.

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<sup>47</sup> Nichols and Stich (2003), p. 37.

Now, this theory of motivation seems initially plausible as much pretense seems to be motivated in this way. However, it is my contention that the desire to enact a possible world script contained in the possible world box is not a necessary condition for an agent to engage in an episode of pretense, for some actual episodes of pretense are not motivated by this specific desire. Setting pretense aside for the moment, it is clear that we all engage in actions that we do not desire to engage in. For instance, suppose that a timid soldier is given orders to engage the enemy. Further, the soldier knows that he will probably be killed if he carries out his orders and engages the enemy. Of course, the soldier carries out his orders because of the desire to win the battle or perhaps even the desire to do his duty. However, the soldier's actions (engaging the enemy) are probably not the result of his desire to engage the enemy. The soldier has no desire to engage the enemy and possibly die. In essence, the soldier engages in an action that he has no desire to engage in. Along with this example, there are many more similar examples of action that can be given in support of the fact that an agent can engage in an action without the desire to do so. Perhaps an agent does her homework although she has no desire to do it. Perhaps an agent gets out of bed to brush her teeth although she really does not want to get up and disturb her peaceful slumber. Whatever the case may be, in many cases, agents engage in actions that they have no desire to engage in.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> I am not suggesting that the above cases of action are ones that are never motivated by the desire to perform the act. I am only trying to show that the desire to perform an action is not a necessary condition for one to engage in the action. For example, the soldier's desire to perform his duty may give rise to the desire carry out his orders and engage the enemy although he knows doing so will most certainly bring about his demise. If this were the case, then the soldier's engaging the enemy would in some sense result from the desire to engage the enemy. However, I feel that the soldiers desire to do his duty is sufficient enough to prompt his engaging the enemy without any desire to engage the enemy.

Following from this, it seems at least possible that agents are also able to engage in pretense without the desire to do so because pretense is a subset of action. Perhaps we can find a case that illustrates this fact. Surely we have all seen children engage in collaborative pretend play as the result of some type of peer pressure. One child wants to engage in an episode of pretend ‘house’ play while the other wants to engage in an episode of pretend ‘grocery store’ play; however, the child who is more timid succumbs to the other child’s peer pressure and finds himself engaged in an episode of pretend ‘house’ play although he has no desire to pretend to play house. Now, both of the children intentionally engage in pretend play because both of the children have the desire to have fun and believe that engaging in an episode of pretend play will be fun. As a result, both of the children intentionally engage in pretend ‘house’ play. However, the timid child did not desire to engage in pretend ‘house’ play although he had the intention (or an adequate guider/motivator pair) to do so.<sup>49</sup> So, some intentional episodes of pretend play, and pretense more generally, are not necessarily motivated by the desire to engage in such an action.

At this point, I believe it would be prudent to make the distinction between *intention* and *desire* in order to clear up any confusion as to what is going on in these cases. When an agent has the *intention* of engaging in an action, the agent possesses guider/motivator pairs that are sufficient to prompt that action. On the other hand, when

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<sup>49</sup> There is a very subtle distinction here. The timid child had the *intention* to engage in pretend ‘house’ play because of his guider/motivator pair—i.e. the belief that engaging in pretend play would be fun and the desire to have fun. However, the timid child did not have the *desire* to engage in pretend ‘house’ play; the child desired to engage in pretend ‘grocery store’ play. In most cases, we would probably say, and perhaps be correct, that the timid child *really* (in some sense) had the desire to engage in an episode of pretend ‘house’ play along with his desire to have fun. However, it is my contention that this desire is not necessary for the child to engage in an episode of pretend ‘house’ play, for the initial guider/motivator pair is enough to prompt the child to engage in pretend ‘house’ play. Thus, the child has the ability to engage in episodes of pretense without desiring to do so.

an agent *desires* to engage in an action, the agent wants to engage in that action. It is entirely possible to have the intention to engage in an action without the desire to do so and vice versa—e.g. I may have the intention of doing my homework without the desire to do my homework or I may have the desire to eat without intending to eat because of my diet. Nichols and Stich's thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation seems to blur the lines between the intention/desire distinction—i.e. the theory presupposes that intentional pretense requires the desire to engage in pretense. However, this is surely not the case as I hope to show through the examples that follow. By blurring the lines between intention and desire, Nichols and Stich's theory of motivation fails as a theory of motivation for pretense because the theory fails to classify some episodes of pretense as such—namely, the episodes of pretense that do not result from the agent's desire to enact them.

I would now like to revisit a few of the cases of pretense that were presented in chapter two in an effort to demonstrate that Nichols and Stich's thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation is an incomplete theory of motivation for pretense. I think we can all agree that the cases presented in chapter two are possible cases of pretense. As a result, any adequate theory of motivation will have to account for these cases. However, I do not feel that Nichols and Stich's theory of motivation can account for all of these cases for the reasons I have mentioned above.

I would like to begin by first taking a look at case 3, the baseball swing. Suppose that Thomas makes certain, random bodily movements as the result of both the belief that making the random movements is a way to celebrate and the desire to celebrate. Unbeknownst to Thomas, he also engages in a cognitively poor, unintentional episode of

acting/role play because he acts like his baseball hero by making a grand slam swing. Furthermore, Thomas' cognitively poor, unintentional grand slam swing is an action attributed to him because the unintentional grand slam swing can be described under an aspect that makes it intentional—i.e. the grand slam swing is identical to making certain, random bodily movements, which are intentional. Now, in order for Nichols and Stich's theory of motivation to account for Thomas' cognitively poor, unintentional acting/role play, it must be the case that Thomas desired to engage in acting like his baseball hero by making a grand slam swing. But, surely Thomas had no such desire, for his episode of acting/role play was motivated by the desire to celebrate alone. So, it seems that Nichols and Stich's theory of motivation fails to classify this case of unintentional acting/role play as pretense. Or does it?

The proponent of the thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation could claim that since Thomas had the desire to engage in certain, random bodily movements, he also had, in some sense, the desire to act like his baseball hero by making a grand slam swing because acting like his baseball hero is the same event as making certain, random bodily movements, albeit under a different description. Thus, the proponent of the thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation could claim that an agent desires to engage in an action so long as there is at least one description under which the action is desired. And this seems reasonable to suppose because proponents of the theory, like Nichols and Stich, seem to equate intention with desire. Now, it was not my intention to make any concrete claims regarding whether or not Thomas actually wanted (desired) to engage in his unintentional action in this particular case. My intention was simply to show that it is possible for an agent to, in some sense, desire unintentional action



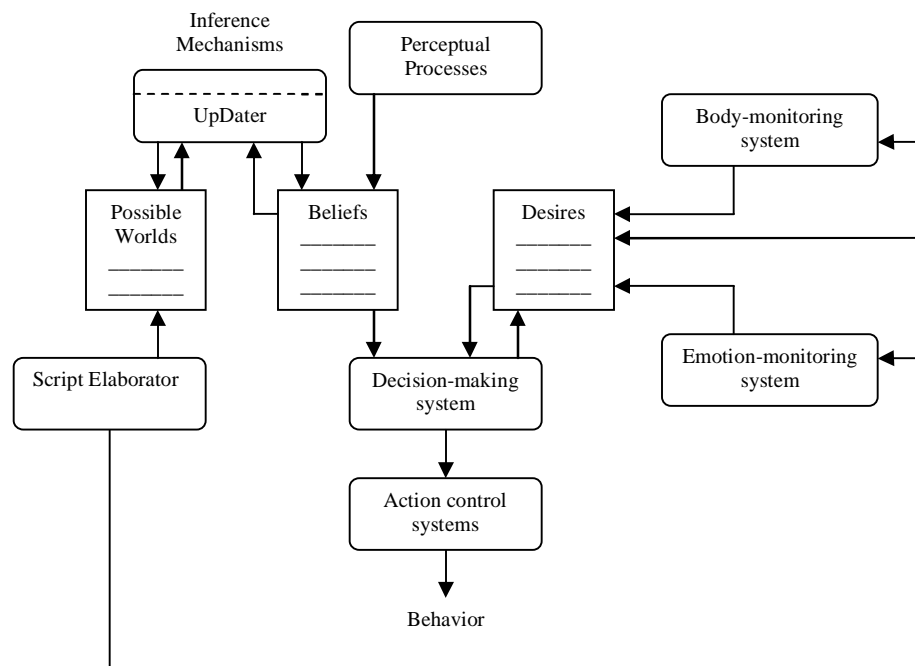
assuming that the unintentional action can be described under a description that makes it both intentional and desired. Consequently, in order to discount Nichols and Stich's theory of motivation, we must show that there are episodes of pretense in which the agent's engagement in the episode is not desired under any description. More specifically, since Nichols and Stich seem to hold that intending is desiring, we must show that there are intentional episodes of pretense in which the engagement in the episodes is not desired by the agent that undertakes them. In order to show this, let us take a look at another case from chapter two.

Let us turn our attention to case 2, the hold up. Suppose that the young boy pretends to be a donkey as the result of a possible world donkey script, the belief that pretending (enacting a possible world donkey script) to be a donkey will save his life, and the desire to live. Clearly, the young boy has the intention in this case to pretend to be a donkey, for it is motivated by a sufficient guider/motivator pair. However, common sense would tell us that the boy does not want (desire) to pretend to be a donkey. He simply has the desire to live. So, it seems that the young boy engages in an episode of pretense without the desire to do so—that is, the boy simply pretends, against his wishes, to be a donkey in order to save his life. Because the boy has no desire to pretend to be a donkey, Nichols and Stich's theory of motivation fails to classify this episode as pretense, thus proving that their theory is, at best, incomplete. Since the theory equates intention with desire, it fails to account for all intentional cases of pretense in which agents intend to engage in an episode of pretense without the desire for such engagement. All in all, Nichols and Stich's thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation fails as a theory of motivation for pretense.

## ii. Peter Carruthers and Emotional Rewards

Peter Carruthers' action-based (emotional reward) theory of motivation is a theory that is somewhat similar to that of Nichols and Stich's thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation, at least with regards to the underlying cognitive architecture that is needed for an agent to engage in an episode of pretense. In fact, Carruthers adopts a substantial portion of Nichols and Stich's cognitive architecture, albeit with a few minor modifications, in order to advance his own action-based theory of motivation. Figure 3 provides a good representation of the cognitive architecture needed, according to Carruthers, in order for an agent to engage in an episode of pretense. Let us take a look at the genealogy of this proposed architecture in order to acquire a better understanding of its inspirations as well as its distinctive cognitive features.

**Figure 3:** *Caruthers' proposed cognitive architecture for pretense*<sup>50</sup>



<sup>50</sup> Inspired by Carruthers (2006a); Carruthers (2006b).

Carruthers' proposed cognitive architecture for pretense traces a substantial portion of its lineage through the supposed problems and imperfections that surround both Nichols and Stich's proposed cognitive architecture and thought-based theory of motivation. So, it is not surprising, in some sense, that Carruthers accepts a large portion of Nichols and Stich's proposed cognitive architecture as well as its presupposed, basic motivations behind action in general. Carruthers simply disagrees over which specific guider/motivator pairs prompt episodes of pretense. Recall, Nichols and Stich hold that pretenders have the desire "to behave in a way that is similar to the way some character or object behaves in the possible world whose description is contained in the Possible World Box."<sup>51</sup> Carruthers believes that this desire, as a motivating factor for pretense, is too generic to account for and thus explain episodes of pretense given the assumed cognitive architecture.

[Nichols and Stich] suggest that some sort of generic desire of this sort is innate, and is what explains the activity of pretending. One problem with this suggestion is that the proposed desire appears to be much too broad. Surely I don't have the desire to behave in the way that *any* agent or thing represented in my possible worlds box behaves. ...So some way will have to be found to restrict the scope of the pretense-motivating desire.<sup>52</sup>

Carruthers, in interpreting Nichols and Stich's thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation, seems to conclude that the motivation to pretend is the result of an intrinsic desire to do so—i.e. when someone engages in pretense, they do so because of an intrinsic desire to act out suppositions contained in the possible world box.<sup>53</sup> So,

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<sup>51</sup> Nichols and Stich (2003), p. 27.

<sup>52</sup> Carruthers (2006a), p. 320.

<sup>53</sup> In my opinion, Carruthers gives an unfavorable interpretation of Nichols and Stich's thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation. It does not seem that Nichols and Stich are necessarily committed to the fact that pretenders have an intrinsic desire to pretend. It is entirely possible that the desire to pretend is specific to each supposition contained in the possible world box that is acted upon. In essence, we may have the intrinsic desire to pretend *x*, *y* or *z* without the intrinsic desire to pretend in general. Perhaps it is even possible to give an account that explains how these supposition specific desires are instrumental rather

according to Carruthers, here is how an episode of pretense would work on Nichols and Stich's account. First, a supposition is generated by the script elaborator—e.g. 'I am a cat.' This supposition would then travel to the desire box where the agent's intrinsic desire to pretend would essentially give rise to the desire to pretend to be a cat (or behave as if the possible world, cat script were true) resulting in an episode of pretense. As a consequence of this progression, Carruthers claims that Nichols and Stich's cognitive architecture needs an arrow which runs from the script elaborator to the desire box. This arrow is supposed to act as a channel that delivers our novel suppositions to the desire box thus resulting in an episode of pretense.<sup>54</sup> Now, this interpretation of Nichols and Stich's cognitive architecture seems to provide us with a more plausible framework from which to account for Nichols and Stich's thought-based theory of motivation. However, if we accept this framework, there seems to be a serious problem that looms over Nichols and Stich's theory of motivation.

If we have the intrinsic desire to pretend and all of our suppositions are delivered to the desire box, why do we fail to enact all of our suppositions? Remember, Nichols and Stich claim that our ability to reason counter-factually provides us with the ability to pretend. And of course, we do engage in episodes of pretense by enacting many of our possible world scenarios. However, we certainly do not want to enact every counter-factual supposition (possible world scenario) that is entertained. For example, I may

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than intrinsic. So, I do not feel that Nichols and Stich are committed to claiming that pretenders have the intrinsic desire to pretend.

<sup>54</sup> I am not entirely sure why Carruthers thinks that suppositions must necessarily be sent from the script elaborator to the desire box for an episode of pretense to ensue. If the desire to pretend is intrinsic as he contends, a belief that behaving like *x* (possible world script) is pretending coupled with the desire to pretend should be enough to prompt an episode of pretense. *X* (possible world script) does not necessarily have to be shipped to the desire box generating the desire to behave as if *x* were the case in order for an episode of pretense to ensue. My best guess is that this arrow represents our ability to choose which suppositions to enact and which not to enact, an ability that Nichols and Stich fail to consider.

suppose that my mother is killed in a bank robbery tomorrow. Nevertheless, I do not have any desire to behave as if that possible world supposition were the case. As a result, Carruthers believes that Nichols and Stich's cognitive architecture cannot fully explain why some suppositions are enacted while others are not. The channel from the script elaborator to the desire box does not discriminate which suppositions pass through it. Hence, a consequence of accepting Nichols and Stich's cognitive architecture is that all possible world suppositions be enacted as episodes of pretense because every supposition will eventually find its way to the desire box where the intrinsic desire to pretend is housed. Of course, this is absurd for not all entertained possible world suppositions are enacted. Therefore, Carruthers deems Nichols and Stich's theory of motivation (coupled with their cognitive architecture) inadequate, for it cannot account for this problem.

To account for this problem as well as to advance his own unique theory of motivation Carruthers contends that entertained suppositions are not only delivered to the desire box, they are also delivered to the emotion and body monitoring systems, both of which are noted in Figure 3. These monitoring systems are going to play a significant filtering role in Carruthers' action-based (emotional reward) theory of motivation for pretense. Let us take a look at how pretense works in conjunction with Carruthers' proposed cognitive architecture (Figure 3). First, Carruthers maintains that all suppositions travel from the script elaborator and are delivered to the desire box as well as to the emotion and body monitoring systems. The monitoring systems process the suppositions in order to determine what emotional and bodily consequences would likely result from the suppositions. These consequences are then made available to the desire box where our motivation to enact our suppositions resides. If the emotional and bodily

consequences for a supposition are not desired, then the likelihood of enacting that supposition is diminished. Likewise, if the emotional and bodily consequences for a supposition are desired, then the likelihood of enacting that supposition is increased.

Let us take a look at a specific example. Suppose that a child entertains the supposition, 'I am a famous rock star.' This supposition is sent to the emotion and body monitoring systems where it is processed for desired and undesired consequences. In this particular instance, the monitoring systems relay that the supposition has favorable consequences—e.g. being a famous rock star is admirable. Thus, the child desires to engage in an episode of pretense (act like a rock star) because enacting the supposition is emotionally rewarding—i.e. it feels good to be admired. In essence, we are motivated to pretend because of the emotional and bodily rewards that we are likely to receive as the result of engaging in an episode of pretense. As Carruthers states, “[People] pretend because they find both the mental rehearsal and the performance of the pretend actions (under suppositional descriptions) to be emotionally rewarding, reflecting their standing desires, values, and interests.”<sup>55</sup>

Let us quickly take a look at another example. Suppose that one has the supposition that 'I am a serial rapist'. This supposition will travel to the desire box as well as the monitoring systems. Upon entering the emotional monitoring system, detrimental emotional consequences will be attached to the initial supposition. The supposition will then be delivered to the desire box where the motivation to act out the supposition will be diminished because of the negative emotional consequences that would ensue. That is, the supposition would, more than likely, not be engaged in because

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<sup>55</sup> Carruthers (2006a), p. 108.

it would not provide an emotional reward in most instances. As we can see from this example, Carruthers' action-based (emotional reward) theory of motivation can adequately explain why only certain suppositions, as opposed to all, are enacted.

Carruthers' action-based (emotional reward) theory of motivation: an agent engaged in an episode of pretense is essentially motivated by the desire to enact possible world scripts contained in the possible world box that are considered to be emotionally rewarding (i.e. the desire for emotional rewards prompts desires to enact certain possible world scenarios).

Perhaps this theory of motivation is an improvement on Nichols and Stich's thought-based theory of motivation. However, we must ask ourselves whether this theory is an adequate theory of motivation for pretense. It does in fact seem that many episodes of pretense result from the desire for emotional rewards. Nonetheless, the theory must be able to account for all episodes of pretense. And it is my contention that it cannot—i.e. some episodes of pretense are not emotionally rewarding to the agent that engages in them. Thus, it is not a necessary condition that episodes of pretense are emotionally rewarding. For instance, we can pretend to kill our parents, pretend to mutilate dead animals, pretend to commit suicide and even pretend for pretending's sake. These acts of pretense, which are entirely possible, typically are not emotionally rewarding. In fact, some of them seem emotionally detrimental. In an effort to explore this issue, let us first take a look at Carruthers' notion of emotional reward.

What is an emotional reward? According to Carruthers, when we entertain possible world suppositions, our emotion and body monitoring systems evaluate these suppositions in an effort to determine the emotional consequences of enacting these suppositions—i.e. whether the suppositions result in positive (good) or negative (bad) emotions. Carruthers contends that episodes of pretense are the result of having the desire to enact suppositions that are perceived by the agent to provide positive (good)

emotions, thus providing the agent with an emotional reward for his actions. For example, children who pretend to be policemen, doctors, rock stars and so forth engage in these specific episodes of pretense because they find these suppositional scenarios admirable (aiming at a perceived good), and thus emotionally rewarding. So, emotional rewards, on Carruthers' view, seem to be emotions that aim at an agent's perceived good, reflecting the agent's overall values and interests. Now, given this definition of emotional reward, does it seem plausible to suppose that pretense is *necessarily* motivated by the desire to enact possible world scripts that are deemed by the agent to be emotionally rewarding? To answer this question we probably first need to look at some specific cases of pretense. And of course, we will do just this in the following paragraphs. Nevertheless, it is my intention to show that, although some episodes of pretense may in fact be motivated by such a desire, there are many episodes of pretense that are *not* motivated by emotional rewards.

Consider cases in which the agent's overall values and interests aim toward the bad. For instance, consider an episode of pretense that is motivated by the desire to enact a possible world script that is perceived by the agent to be emotionally detrimental. It is entirely possible that episodes of pretense like this occur. For example, perhaps an agent intentionally engages in an episode of pretense in which he murders his entire family. In most instances, we would probably not say that the agent in this case acts because the action is perceived to be emotionally rewarding. Instead, it would seem that the agent engages in the episode of pretense simply because he desires emotions that are



detrimental—i.e. the agent desires emotions that aim at his perceived bad, reflecting his overall values interests.<sup>56</sup>

Now, it would be easy for Carruthers, at this point, to offer one of two possible replies in order to show that the above case is indeed motivated by emotional rewards. First, Carruthers could claim that the agent in this case receives an indirect emotional reward (e.g. attention from a crowd) from engaging in the episode of pretense.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps the agent in this particular case pretends to murder his entire family, for instance, because he finds the power he has over others to be extremely emotionally rewarding. Or, instead of being motivated by an indirect emotional reward, Carruthers could perhaps claim that the agent in this case simply makes a mistake. That is, the agent is motivated by an emotional reward but simply fails to aim at the correct object of his desire making it seem as if the agent desires the bad when, in fact, the bad is the agent's perceived good. For instance, an agent may pretend to murder his parents because the action is perceived to be emotionally rewarding. However, it just happens that the agent in this case perceives the bad (murdering his parents) to be the good—i.e. he makes a mistake. In essence, the agent in this case is essentially motivated to pretend as the result of an emotional reward that aims at the good although the resulting action's outward appearance seems to suggest

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<sup>56</sup> I think Carruthers' action-based (emotional reward) theory of motivation could be interpreted in such a way as to allow for desiring the bad. Recall, pretenders desire to enact pretend scenarios that are emotionally rewarding—that is, they enact scenarios that reflect their standing desires, values, and interests. Thus, desiring the bad could be considered an emotional reward in some sense because desiring the bad could reflect an agent's standing desires, values and interests. However, if we accept this interpretation, it is still not clear whether all episodes of pretense result from a desire for emotional rewards. First, it is unclear whether suppositions must be broadcast to the emotion and body monitoring systems for emotional processing before they can be enacted. Secondly, it is unclear whether an agent can act against his standing desires, values, and interests through his weakness of will. If weakness of will is possible, it seems reasonable to suppose that some episodes of pretense do not result from emotional rewards, for they do not reflect the agent's overall values and interests. See Davidson (1969) for further discussion on weakness of will. These matters have to be resolved before we can accept Carruthers' theory of motivation as adequate.

<sup>57</sup> See Carruthers (2006b), p. 298, for further examples.

otherwise. Whatever the case may be, we must ask ourselves if we must always appeal to one of these scenarios in order to account for episodes of pretense that are often considered emotionally detrimental. Must we always trace the object of our desires back to a perceived good? It seems that, in some instances, we just simply desire that which is bad.

When we feel furious, hurt, envious, jealous, threatened, frustrated, abandoned, endangered, rejected, and so on, what we often seek is precisely the harm or destruction of someone... Given such moods and circumstances, harming another can be the proper and direct object of attraction. There is no need to posit another object, especially not an egoistic object like pleasure, power over others, showing oneself powerful, getting things to go one's own way, getting revenge.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, it seems that we are able to desire the bad for its own sake. As a result, I see no reason to believe that we are unable to engage in an episode of pretense for the simple fact that it is perceived to be emotionally detrimental. In fact, it seems likely that we do engage in such episodes for this very reason—i.e. we often engage in episodes of pretense precisely because they are perceived to be emotionally detrimental. We need not appeal to a scenario which casts our emotionally detrimental episodes of pretense under a light which makes them appear emotionally rewarding.

At this point, if we are persuaded by this line of argument, Carruthers could simply move to his second possible reply. That is, desire, as a matter of fact, always aims at the good. In essence, with respect to the case above, the agent's murdering his parents is the good simply in virtue of the fact that it is desired. But is this right—that is, does desire always aim at the good? I am of the opinion that it does not, necessarily. We can desire the bad; but, that bad is not good simply because it is desired. As Michael Stocker expresses, “A desire for what is bad need not make it good; on the contrary, its badness

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<sup>58</sup> Stocker (1979), p. 748.

may infect the desire, making it bad.”<sup>59</sup> Thus, it seems that we are able to legitimately desire the bad making it reasonable to suppose that some episodes of pretense are motivated by the fact that they are perceived to be emotionally detrimental.<sup>60</sup> At this juncture, let us take a look at a case from chapter two that somewhat illustrates this point.

Let us take a look at case 1, the adult’s acting career. Suppose that Samantha engages in an episode of intentional acting/role play as the result of both the written script and the desire to perform certain written scripts. Now, according to Carruthers’ action-based (emotional reward) theory of motivation, the only way Samantha’s episode of pretense will ever get off the ground is if the supposition generator provides the emotion and body monitoring systems with the possible world script (written script) for it to be evaluated and marked as emotionally rewarding. However, although this is a possible motivation for the episode of pretense, we must ask ourselves whether or not this is the only possible way in which this episode of pretense can be motivated. Let us suppose that the emotion and body monitoring system mark the enactment as emotionally detrimental—i.e. the written script aims at a perceived bad. Further, suppose that Samantha is in a deteriorating state of mind because she is extremely angry at many of the events happening in her life, so much so that she desires to enact episodes that are emotionally harmful. If this were the case, it seems likely that Samantha’s engagement in this episode of pretense is motivated because of the fact that she perceives it to be emotionally detrimental. In essence, she desires a perceived bad which reflects her

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<sup>59</sup> Stocker (1979), p. 749.

<sup>60</sup> For example, it seems very reasonable to suppose that an agent can pretend (out of anger) to kill someone even though the action causes himself emotional harm, all the while reflecting his overall values and interests. That is, an agent can simply desire the perceived bad. The act of killing someone is not an action that aims at the good simply because it is desired.

overall values and interests at the time. I think this case clearly shows that it is at least possible that pretenders enact episodes of pretense that are both emotionally detrimental as well as emotionally rewarding, for both types of emotions can reflect an agent's standing desires, values and interests. Thus, emotional rewards are not a necessary condition for agents to engage in episodes of pretense. As a result, Carruthers' action-based (emotional reward) theory of motivation is, at best, incomplete. And, if we are not fully satisfied with this line of argumentation, we can go even further for it is almost certainly unnecessary for suppositions to be broadcast to the emotion and body monitoring systems before an episode of pretense can proceed. I believe that Nichols and Stich are partially right in that a thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation can serve as a sufficient condition for the motivation behind episodes of pretense. Let us take a look at an example.

Recall case 4 presented in chapter two, the act of deception. Let us suppose that Robert engages in a cognitively rich, intentional episode of deception as the result of a possible world script, a belief that the script is deceptive and the desire to deceive. Now, recall from previous examples, the desire to deceive coupled with a script that is believed to be deceptive is sufficient to motivate an episode of pretense. An agent need not necessarily have the desire to enact a deceptive episode of pretense for the episode to commence.<sup>61</sup> In fact, it is possible that enacting the episode may even conflict with the agent's overall interests and values. For instance, suppose that Robert valued telling the truth at all costs and had some vested interest in doing so. On this assumption, if a

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<sup>61</sup> Specifically, we should pay close attention to case 2 (the hold up) as it is presented at the end of section one of this chapter. Recall, the example clearly shows that it is not a necessary condition that the agent desire to engage in an episode of pretense for the episode to commence. The agent need only a guider/motivator pair that is sufficient to prompt the episode of pretense.

deceptive script were sent to his emotion and body monitoring systems, enacting the script would be tagged as emotionally detrimental rather than emotionally rewarding; and, according to Carruthers, Robert would always refrain from engaging in such an episode. However, it seems that this sort of pretend scenario is possible. However, whether or not the episode of pretense reflects his values and interests or whether the episode will inevitably be marked as emotionally detrimental or rewarding, it is clear that (i) Robert does indeed engage in deception because he is sufficiently motivated to do so by the desire to deceive coupled with the belief that a certain possible world script is deceptive and (ii) Robert's engagement in this episode is irrespective of whether the deceptive supposition is ever sent to the emotion and body monitoring systems and evaluated for its emotional consequences.<sup>62</sup> Robert's practical reasoning system is enough to generate an episode of pretense. Thus, it should be clear that, though it is sufficient, it is not necessary that episodes of pretense result from the desire for an emotional reward, or even for an emotional detriment for that matter. We often engage in pretense irrespective of the emotional consequences that follow. As a result, Carruthers' action-based (emotional reward) theory of motivation is, at best, incomplete, for it cannot account for all episodes of pretense.

### **iii. David Velleman and the '*i-belief*' and the '*i-desire*'**

In his book, *The Possibility of Practical Reason* (2000), David Velleman offers a radically different approach to the motivation that underlies episodes of pretense, and pretend play more specifically. According to Velleman, traditional belief/desire

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<sup>62</sup> Presumably, in this case, if the deceptive supposition were sent to the emotion and body monitoring systems, it is likely that Robert's episode of pretense would result from the desire to enact a possible world script that is emotionally damaging, whether this turns out to reflect his overall values and interests or not.

approaches to explaining the motivation which underlies pretend play “make the child out to be depressingly unchildlike.”<sup>63</sup> In other words, traditional belief/desire accounts of motivation seem unable to account for what actually takes place during an episode of pretend play. First, Velleman contends that belief/desire accounts of motivation fail to fully incorporate or immerse children in the episodes of pretend play which they enact. Belief/desire accounts of motivation seem to require that children maintain a firm grip on reality in order to structure their desired pretense in a way that simulates that reality. However, this inhibits children from ever fully immersing themselves in the episode of pretense, for children view the episode as something to be enacted rather than something that they are acting out of. In a sense, they are divorced from their episodes of pretend play. In contrast to this account of motivation, Velleman contends that, as a matter of fact, children often seem to lose focus on reality rather than gripping it, because they are so immersed in their episodes of pretend play—in a sense, episodes of pretend play are characterized by the imagination taking over and motivating the novel action of which the child is apart. Thus, belief/desire accounts of pretense, according to Velleman, fail to account for children’s complete immersion in episodes of pretense.

Secondly, belief/desire accounts of motivation seem to fail to account for the creativity that children spawn during novel episodes of pretend play. Velleman contends that belief/desire accounts of motivation require children to consider which actions are appropriate to a given episode of pretend play. This severely limits a child’s creativity within an episode of pretend play, for the child’s actual beliefs about the episode largely influence his or her actions. In contrast to belief/desire accounts of motivation, children

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<sup>63</sup> Velleman (2000), p. 256.

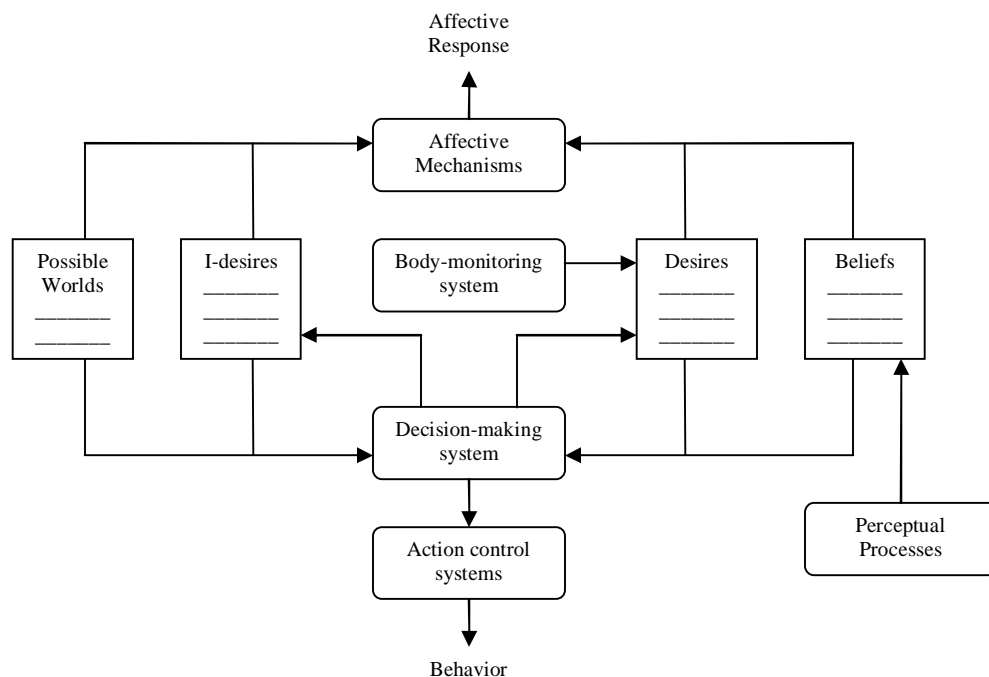
seem to be very creative when they are engaged in an episode of pretend play. That is, children seem to invent their own novel ways of engaging in certain episodes of pretend play, divorcing themselves in some sense (often radically) from their actual beliefs and desires about these episodes of pretend play. As a matter of fact, engaging in an episode of pretense does not require the child to have any conceptual knowledge about the pretend scenario which they are enacting (or even about pretense in general), giving the child further leeway towards novel creativity. As a result, children often enact the same episode of pretend play in widely varying and unique ways. The uniqueness found in episodes of pretend play results, according to Velleman, from the fact that children engage in episodes of pretense from within the framework of the pretend scenario (which often gives rise to novel actions) rather than within the framework of reality (which often gives rise to common actions) which is presupposed by traditional belief/desire accounts of motivation. As a result, Velleman argues that belief/desire pairs do not motivate episodes of pretense because they severely limit creativity—i.e. they simply fail to account for what actually takes place during a genuine episode of pretense. Instead, he posits that children are motivated from within the imagined scenarios by *mock-belief/mock-desire* pairs (*i-belief/i-desire* pairs), the imagination's equivalent to belief/desire pairs. This allows children to fully immerse themselves in, or become a part of, their episodes of pretend play.

In light of the above considerations, David Velleman offers his '*i-belief*' and '*i-desire*' theory of motivation for pretense which starkly contrasts with traditional belief/desire theories of motivation like the ones presented in the previous two sections of this chapter. On this theory, *i-beliefs* (imaginings) and *i-desires* (corresponding

imaginative desires), rather than beliefs and desires, function as the guider/motivator pairs that motivate episodes of pretense from within the point of view of the imagined scenario—i.e. the imagination is responsible for motivating episodes of pretense.

I would like to take a look at an example offered by Velleman in order to fully appreciate the tenets of this unique theory. I have provided a diagram of the possible cognitive framework that underlies this theory of motivation in Figure 4. My hope is that this diagram will help us to follow Velleman's example more closely as well as to get a better grasp of the theory that he endorses.

**Figure 4:** Possible rendition of the cognitive architecture underlying Velleman's proposed theory of motivation for pretense<sup>64</sup>



Let us begin our example by first distinguishing beliefs and desires from *i-beliefs* and *i-desires*. According to Velleman, beliefs (coupled with desires) motivate our actions

<sup>64</sup> Inspired by Doggett and Egan (2007)



as well as aim at the truth—i.e. they motivate action that conforms to reality. “People who believe that P are disposed to act in ways that would, if P were true, be likely to make the propositions that they desire true.”<sup>65</sup> For example, if I believe that there is a glass of milk in the refrigerator and I desire to have a glass of milk to drink, I will be disposed to retrieve the glass of milk from the refrigerator and raise it to my mouth. In contrast, *i-beliefs* (imaginings) and *i-desires* (wishes) motivate our episodes of pretense from within the framework of the fiction as well as aim at the fictional—i.e. they aim at distorting perceived reality. “People who imagine that P are disposed to act in a way that would, if P were fictional, be likely to make the propositions that they i-desire fictional.”<sup>66</sup> For instance, if I imagine that there is a cup of milk in the refrigerator and wish to have a glass of milk to drink, I will be disposed to retrieve a ketchup bottle from the refrigerator and raise it to my mouth. All in all, beliefs and desires seem to exclusively motivate action that conforms to the bounds of reality whereas *i-beliefs* and *i-desires* seem to exclusively motivate action that does not entirely conform to the bounds of reality (pretense). Keeping this distinction in mind, let us take a look at an example offered by Velleman.

Suppose that a child engages in an episode of pretend play in which he dangles his arm from his nose to a kitchen chair in an effort to pretend that he is an elephant fetching a drink from a pail of water. Traditional accounts of motivation would explain this episode of pretense as resulting, for example, from the belief that ‘I am an elephant’ as well as the belief that ‘the chair is a pail of water’ both coupled with the desire to act

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<sup>65</sup> Doggett and Egan (2007), p. 10.

<sup>66</sup> Doggett and Egan (2007), p. 10.

like an elephant fetching a drink from a pail of water. According to Velleman, this account is untenable. First, belief aims at the truth. Hence, we are unable to believe, for instance, that a chair is a pail of water. Furthermore, we cannot desire to act like an elephant because we cannot desire things that are unattainable. At best, we can *imagine* (have an *i-belief*) that we are elephants and *wish* (have an *i-desire*) to act like an elephant fetching a drink from a pail of water. Thus, we are motivated by our *i-belief/i-desire* pairs to pretend to be an elephant fetching a drink from a pail of water—i.e. the imagination alone provides the motivation for an agent to engage in episodes of pretense.

As Velleman claims:

A motivational explanation of make-believe has now emerged along the following lines. What moves me to dangle my arm between my nose and the seat of a chair is, on the one hand, imagining that this is the way to drink from a pail of water with my trunk; and, on the other hand, wishing to drink from a pail of water with my trunk. In the fiction that I am an elephant, my imagining and wishing are a belief and a desire, moving me to drink from the pail. When my imagining and wishing move me to behave as if drinking, they fulfill the motivational role of the belief and desire that they are imagined to be, with the result that I enact my imagined role as an elephant.<sup>67</sup>

So, children who imagine they are elephants are disposed to act in a way that would be desirable if they were elephants as opposed to acting in ways that are believed to be elephant-like. In other words, children engaged in pretend elephant play act from within the point of view of the imagined scenario as the result of their *i-belief/i-desire* pairs. As Tyler Doggett and Andy Egan express, “...pretend action is motivated by i-desires and imaginings, with the aim of making the i-desired things *fictional*, rather than true.”<sup>68</sup>

Velleman’s ‘*i-belief*’ and ‘*i-desire*’ theory of motivation: an agent engaged in an episode of pretense is essentially motivated by his or her imagination (i.e. *i-belief/i-desires* pairs motivate action that does not conform to the bounds of perceived reality).

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<sup>67</sup> Velleman (2000), pp. 260-261.

<sup>68</sup> Doggett and Egan (2007), p. 10.

Now, Velleman's theory of motivation is, as we have seen, unique, for it is radically different from the many traditional belief/desire accounts of motivation. Moreover, it is highly controversial whether the theory can succeed in accounting for episodes of pretense—i.e. it is highly controversial whether the imagination can indeed motivate episodes of pretense.<sup>69</sup> However, I am not particularly concerned with this issue. So, I will grant that it is at least possible for the imagination to motivate episodes of pretense, although I have strong independent reasons for denying this claim. My task is to simply show that Velleman's '*i-belief*' and '*i-desire*' theory of motivation does not account for all episodes of pretense, and is thus incomplete. In order to show that this theory is an incomplete theory of motivation, it will be sufficient to show that there are episodes of pretense that are not motivated by the imagination—i.e. by *i-belief/i-desire* pairs. At this point, let us return to a few of the cases of pretense presented in chapter two.

Recall case 5, the war game. On three consecutive days, Walter participates in a war game. Over the course of these three days, Walter engages in numerous episodes of pretense as the result of his specific guider/motivator pairs on each day as chronicled by the possible guider/motivator pairs given at the conclusion of the case. Moreover, these possible guider/motivator pairs echo Currie and Ravenscroft (2002) for they account for the possible ways in which one can be said to engage in an episode of pretense: (i) an agent can act without intentionally engaging in an episode of pretense; (ii) an agent can intentionally engage in an episode of pretense, although the agent does not desire to do so—i.e. the agent has no desire to act out his imaginings (possible world scripts); and (iii)

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<sup>69</sup> Currie and Ravenscroft (2002), pp. 124-131.

an agent can intentionally engage in an episode of pretense as well as have desire to do so.<sup>70</sup>

We can describe [Walter's] behavior as that of someone not engaged in [intentional] pretence at all; as the behavior of someone engaged in role-taking pretence but whose motivation is not connected to states of imagining; as the behavior of someone whose motivation is partly a response to his imaginings... As we rise up the hierarchy from (1) to (2) we introduce the idea of [intentional] pretence. As we move from (2) to (3) we introduce a role for imagining.<sup>71</sup>

With this in mind, let us try to describe Walter's episodes of pretense on each of the consecutive days.

On day one, Walter enacts the war game as the result of possible guider/motivator pair number one—namely, the belief that shooting one's friend with a toy gun will result in winning the game coupled with the desire to win the game. Given this guider/motivator pair, Walter's action is simply an intentional action for it conforms to the bounds of perceived reality. That is, he is not being guided by a representation—e.g. 'I am a military commander'—that is not representative of his perceived reality. Thus, he does not engage in pretending at all; he is simply engaging in legitimate action. It is possible that outside observers would classify his actions as an episode of pretense because his actions could have reasonably resulted from guider/motivator pairs that are characteristic of some type of pretense. For instance, a passerby would, in all likelihood, view Walter's actions as an episode of pretend play. However, this pretense ascription would be purely accidental because there is no description of his pretense that would make the pretense intentional. Walter does not intend to pretend at all.

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<sup>70</sup> In (ii), the agent is minimally, if at all, motivated by his imagination (possible world scripts)—i.e. the agent has no desire to act out his possible world scripts although he does so as the result of his belief/desire pairs. Thus, his imagining plays a minimal role, if it plays a role at all, in motivating his episode of pretense. In (iii), the agent is partially motivated by his imagination (possible world scripts)—i.e. the agent has the desire to enact them. Thus, the agent's imagination guides his episode of pretense.

<sup>71</sup> Currie and Ravenscroft (2002), pp. 121-122.

On day two, Walter enacts the war game as the result of possible guider/motivator pair number two—namely, the belief that a possible world script provides a way to have fun coupled with the desire to have fun. Hence, it is obvious that Walter engages in an intentional episode of pretend play. But, we must note that Walter does not desire to engage in an episode of pretend play. He simply desires to have fun and believes that engaging in certain behaviors (possible world pretend play scripts) will provide this.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, Walter maintains a firm grip on reality during his pretense. That is, his imagination (or the possible world fun script) plays a very minimal role in motivating his actions—i.e. he is *playing like* the possible world fun script as opposed to *playing out of* the possible world script. Thus, Walter’s imagination plays a very minimal role, if it plays a role at all, in motivating his pretend play.

On day three, Walter enacts the war game as the result of possible guider/motivator pair number three—namely, the belief that a possible world script provides a way to have fun coupled with the desire to have fun and the desire to enact the possible world fun script. Again, like day two, it is obvious that Walter engages in an intentional episode of pretend play. However, on this day, as opposed to day two, Walter desires to enact the possible world fun script. That is, he desires to act in accordance with his imaginings (possible world fun scripts). Because of this desire, Walter’s imaginings, in some sense play a motivational role in his actions. For instance, “...when he imagines that he has been shot, he pretends to be injured...” because he has the desire

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<sup>72</sup> I am not excluding the possibility that the desire to have fun coupled with the belief that enacting a possible world script will provide a way to have fun could give rise to the desire to enact a possible world script. I only intend to illustrate that it is not a necessary condition that one have the desire to pretend (enact a possible world scenario) before they can engage in an episode of pretense.

to act in accordance with that imagining<sup>73</sup> In other words, Walter's imagining guides him into enacting the appropriate behaviors (he pretends to be injured) that conform to these imaginings. Hence, his imaginings, on day three, play a motivation role—namely, they guide his action. Thus, it seems that Walter is, at least in part, *acting out of* his possible world fun script rather than *acting like* his possible world fun script. So, it should be clear that the imagination can play a crucial motivational role in one's action, as is illustrated by Walter on day three.

Now, Walter's actions on the three days discussed above seem to illustrate at least two different ways in which an episode of pretense can be motivated in the traditional way. Velleman, however, denies that the above descriptions of pretense are even possible. In other words, he holds that episodes of pretense can only be motivated by the imagination, or by *i-beliefs* coupled with *i-desires*. As a result, it is my guess that Velleman would claim that Walter does not engage in an episode of pretense on day one because his actions are motivated by belief/desire pairs. That is, Walter is simply engaging in legitimate actions. Similarly, on days two and three, it seems that Velleman would claim that Walter is engaging in pretend play, though the traditional motivational descriptions given in these cases are incorrect for they do not allow Walter to enter into his fiction. Instead, Velleman claims, Walter's engaging in pretend play is the result of his imagination. So, although Walter may have the desire to have fun and the desire to pretend coupled with beliefs about imaginary fun things, these mental states are motivationally inert. At most, they perhaps help Walter focus his attention on his belief-like and desire-like imaginings, which fundamentally provide the motivational force for

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<sup>73</sup> Currie and Ravenscroft (2002), p. 120.

his episodes of pretense. Thus, Walter is motivated, for instance, by his *i-belief* that shooting his gun will result in killing someone coupled with his *i-desire* to kill someone.

Now, let us assume that Velleman is correct for the moment. Obviously, if this is the case, Walter is fully immersed and *acting out of* his pretend scenario. However, is it a necessary condition that Walter be motivated by his imagination (*i-belief/i-desire* pairs) in order to be fully immersed and engaged in an episode of pretense? That is, must he be motivated from within the fiction in order for him to *act out of* the fiction? It is my contention that this condition is not a necessary one. And Velleman fails to give us any significant reason for thinking that it is. Perhaps imagination does indeed motivate some episodes of pretense (and I am surely not endorsing the claim that it does); but assuming that it does, this type of motivation for pretense neither excludes the possibility that traditional accounts of motivation can prompt episodes of pretense nor excludes the possibility that agents, motivated by traditional accounts, can *act out of* (or fully immerse themselves in) their fictions. “Velleman is simply begging the question... [He] claims that a child enters an imaginary world only if that child is motivated by imagination. As it is, Velleman is simply asserting that entering an imaginary world requires motivation by imagination.”<sup>74</sup> And I see no reason to accept this claim. In fact, pretense requires the pretender to hold onto some degree of reality. Recall the definition of pretense provided in chapter one. Pretense is an action that departs, in some sense, from perceived reality; but, “pretense is *at most* a distortion of reality.”<sup>75</sup> Thus, having a firm grip on reality seems to more closely mirror what actually happens during an episode of pretense as

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<sup>74</sup> Funkhouser and Spaulding (forthcoming).

<sup>75</sup> Harris (2000), p. 8, (my italics).

opposed to the pretender entertaining fanatical flights of fancy, as Velleman seems to claim. With that said, the proponent of traditional accounts of motivation need not deny the imagination a role in motivating pretense. On the contrary, the imagination plays a significant role in the production of pretense—i.e. imagination guides the pretender’s action. So, if we return to our aforementioned case, it is clear that it is at least possible that Walter’s engagement in pretense is the result of a traditional account of motivation—e.g. Walter engages in pretend play because he desires to enact a fantasy (possible world script) that he believes to be fun. Furthermore, this traditional account of motivation does not hamper Walter from fully immersing himself in the fiction, as is countenanced in the following excerpt from Currie and Ravenscroft (2002).

[The traditional account] allows that, while imagination is not what motivates the pretense, it is, at one further remove, what drive the pretense. The motivation makes sense, for Walter and for us, in terms of how Walter responds imaginatively—in a presumably spontaneous and unreflective way—to the story. And we need not think, as Velleman’s description encourages us to think, of someone who is motivated by belief and desires rather than by imaginings as a calculating and dispassionate agent. In all sorts of situations we act skillfully and creatively on the basis of belief and desires that make little or no conscious impact on us; the child’s consciousness may be wholly absorbed by the imagining. Consistent with [the traditional account], the child’s experience may be one of a rich and immediate connection between imagination and pretend action.<sup>76</sup>

So, how might we describe Walter’s episode of pretense? Well, perhaps we can describe it as a cognitively poor, intentional episode of pretend play. Walter is guided by both his fantasy (possible world script) and the belief that this fantasy will be fun. Moreover, he is motivated by his desire to enact his fantasy as well as the desire to have fun. He, thus, immerses himself in the fantasy. However, because the episode is cognitively poor, Walter is unaware of his motivations for engagement. He simply experiences an unmediated connection between his fantasy and his episode of pretense—i.e. he is fully immersed in pretend play. Thus, it is clear that episodes of pretense can be motivated by

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<sup>76</sup> Currie and Ravenscroft (2002), p. 124; see also Funkhouser and Spaulding (forthcoming).



the traditional account consisting of beliefs and desires. As a result, Velleman's '*i-belief*' and '*i-desire*' theory of motivation is, at best, incomplete.

Now that we have shown that traditional accounts of motivation are consistent with pretenders fully entering into their fantasy realms, we must ask ourselves whether or not pretenders *must* fully enter into their fantasy realms during an episode of pretense. In my opinion, it seems a though there are episodes of pretense in which the pretenders consciously make an effort to divorce themselves from their imaginings; but, they are pretending nonetheless. When we *act like* (or *act out*), as opposed to *acting out of*, our imaginings we seem to be engaging in an episodes of pretense. Perhaps we are indeed holding onto reality (allowing our beliefs to infect our possible world scenarios) and not fully immersing ourselves in the fantasy; but, we are still nevertheless engaging in pretense. If not pretense, than what else would we call it? Suppose, for example, that an actor engages in movements across a stage because he is trying to earn a decent living for his family. Of course, his movements mirror the written script. However, the actor is not fully engaging the script. He is not fully entering into the fantasy world. He is simply making structured movements that are motivated by certain belief/desire pairs—e.g. the belief that making certain movements (following the script) will net him some money coupled with the desire for money. On Velleman's account, the actor would simply be engaging in legitimate action. But, the actor is clearly engaging in an episode of pretense, for his actions resulted from him half-heartedly representing himself as a character in the script. If asked, the actor would most certainly acknowledge that he was engaged in some type of pretense, even though his actions may be unintentional. That is, the actor would have a cognitively rich understanding of his unintentional pretense.

Hence, Velleman's account of motivation fails even if we grant that full immersion in pretense requires imagination as motivation. As it happens, there are varying degrees with which one can take up an episode of pretense. And as a result, many episodes of pretense do not require complete immersion. To say that pretense can only occur with full immersion, as Velleman claims, jumps the gun in my opinion, for it seems to ignore the very definition of pretense itself.

Let us take a look at one final example—case 6, the police investigator. We are given two possible guider/motivator pairs at the conclusion of the case. The first pair (the belief that making certain movements will result in capturing a criminal coupled with the desire to catch a criminal) does not provide a ripe avenue for the pretender to immerse himself in the fiction in any robust way. He is simply engaging in an episode of intentional pretense while trying to stay as close to reality as possible in order to find a killer. In contrast, the second guider/motivator pair (a possible world script and the belief that this possible world script provides a way to catch a criminal couple with the desire to both catch a criminal and enact the script) allows the pretender to fully immerse himself in the fiction. That is, the fantasy guides that action. Of course, we can give Velleman the benefit of the doubt and stipulate that the second guider/motivator pair is an *i-belief/i-desire* pair (perhaps we were just mistaken in our initial description). However, it is clear that first guider/motivator pair cannot be stipulated as an *i-belief/i-desire* pair, for the action that ensues is a legitimate action on Velleman's account. Moreover, it is clear that the event which result's from the first guider/motivator pair is identical to the event that result's from the second guider/motivator pair. As a result, Velleman's account leads us into a contradiction if we take the definition of pretense offered in the preceding chapters

seriously. That is, his theory claims that an event is not identical to itself; and, this is, of course, absurd. Making certain, calculated movements to find a criminal (intentional pretense) is identical to pretending that you are a criminal (unintentional acting/role play) and vice versa. Therefore, Velleman's 'i-belief' and 'i-desire' theory of motivation is, at best, incomplete, for it does not capture all episodes of pretense. Some episodes of pretense do in fact result from belief/desire pairs.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The unique ability to engage in pretense has provided human beings with the capacity to act ‘out of their world’. In other words, human beings have the ability to act in accordance with possible world scenarios. This ability is perhaps most prominently seen through a child’s pretend play. However, once we focus our attention on pretense as a subset of action, we begin to realize that pretense dots the landscape of human action. As a result, current (singular account) theories of motivation, which purport to account for the motivation which underlies our episodes of pretense, fail to account for *all* of the motivating factors which prompt us to pretend, for they neglect the enormity and extent of the pretense subset of action. In essence, these singular account theories of motivation fail to classify many genuine episodes of pretense as such, for the theories were built on an inadequate foundation.

In chapter one, I began by offering a definition of pretense which provides us with an adequate foundation for devising a successful theory of motivation. Pretense is an extensive subset of action—namely, actions that do not entirely conform to the bounds of perceived reality. Given this definition of pretense, we are able to distinguish many, otherwise unnoticeable, episodes of pretense—e.g. deception and practical simulation. By illuminating these unnoticed episodes of pretense, it is my contention that we are in a better position to successfully answer the motivation question regarding pretense—i.e. why do we engage in pretense?

In chapter two, I further elaborated on this foundation through an analysis of action coupled with some empirical investigation. This analysis essentially provides us

with a look at the broad landscape of human pretense by highlighting the different possible varieties of pretense. Following from Donald Davidson's definition of action along with some empirical investigation, we found that pretense can be either intentional or unintentional depending on which guider/motivator pairs prompt the action. Furthermore, episodes of pretense can either be cognitively rich or cognitively poor depending on whether the agent is aware of his guider/motivator pairs for acting and the various descriptions that are true of the action. Thus, episodes of pretense can be divided into four possible varieties: intentional and cognitively rich, intentional and cognitively poor, unintentional and cognitively rich, and unintentional and cognitively poor. These possible varieties arise strictly out of an analysis of action, of which pretense is a subset. Along with these varieties of pretense, I also provided an analysis of pretense from a motivational perspective because many types of pretense result from similar motivations. The resulting analysis, which is by no means exhaustive, provides us with four types of pretense: pretend play, acting/role play, deception, and practical simulation. Armed with these analyses, I provided a number of cases of pretense that one might miss without such analyses.

In chapter three, I took an in depth look at current singular account theories of motivation—Peter Curruthers' action-based (emotional reward) theory of motivation; Shaun Nichols and Stephen Stich's thought-based (counter-factual) theory of motivation; and David Velleman's '*i-belief*' and '*i-desire*' theory of motivation—in order to determine if they stand up to the foundation that I have provided. In other words, I enquired as to whether these theories of motivation are able to account for the vast variety of pretense we find throughout human action. As we probed these theories

against a backdrop of pretense cases provided in chapter two, it soon became evident that they fail to classify legitimate episodes of pretense as such. As a result, the singular account theories of motivation are, at best, incomplete theories of motivation. Thus, we are left asking, why do we engage in pretense? What are our true motivations for engaging in such a remarkable type of action?

Given that singular account theories of motivation fail to provide us with a complete motivational theory for pretense, where does this leave us? It seems as though it is simply impossible for singular account theories to ever provide us with a complete theory of motivation because pretense, like action, is motivated in numerous ways. As a matter of fact, there is no singular type of motivation for pretense at all. The motivations which underlie pretense are as numerous as the number of specific episodes of pretense which dot the landscape of human action. Hence, it seems more reasonable to prefer a *pluralistic* account of motivation. Pretense, like action more generally, is motivated for numerous reasons. Thus, it is my hope that the analyses that I provided will propagate a need for a pluralistic account of motivation which is needed if we are ever going to formulate a successful theory of motivation for pretense. Only then will we be able to fully appreciate the complexity and vastness of our unique ability to pretend.

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