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# Magic, Emotion and Practical Metabolism: Affective Praxis in Sartre and Collingwood

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## ABSTRACT

This article develops a new way of understanding the integration of emotions in practical life and the practical appraisal of emotions, drawing on insights from both J-P. Sartre and R. G. Collingwood. I develop a concept of “practical metabolism” and show that emotions need to be understood not only as transformations from determinate to indeterminate practical intuitions, but also as transformations in the reverse direction. Firstly, I provide a new conception of the dynamic phenomenal structure of the emotions that can resolve significant tensions in the Sartre’s theory. Secondly, I develop that theory to shed light on the diverse socially mediated roles of emotions in practical life by drawing on Collingwood’s philosophy of magic. Thirdly, I deploy the notion of practical metabolism to address the appraisal of emotions, setting out a framework for understanding the various ways in which emotional expression is subject to structural breakdown.

## KEYWORDS

J-P Sartre; R. G. Collingwood; emotion; magic; practical metabolism

## 1. Introduction

To understand the emotions we need to understand the variety of roles that they play in practical life and at the same time how those various roles form a coherent whole. Emotions are not simply feelings arising when things are going well or otherwise, they are integrated into our sense of how things are going, embedded in practical life, recognized as motivating and demotivating of action.<sup>1</sup> Emotions are also the objects of our action, when we act to motivate (or demotivate) ourselves, and the aim of action, when we act in order to bring about emotions.<sup>2</sup> An integrated understanding requires a phenomenology of emotions that does not consider them as isolable elements of single actions, but rather as integral to the dynamic structure of open-ended practical concern.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will*; Helm, *Emotional Reason: Deliberation, Motivation, and the Nature of Value*.

<sup>2</sup> Elster, “Emotion and Action.”

<sup>3</sup> This is the key point of convergence amongst those who take a distinctively *phenomenological* view of the emotions: emotions have an intentional structure that involves the affective presentation, in intuition, of practical and evaluative sense. Emotions for phenomenologists are what Bennett Helm calls “felt evaluations,” Helm, *Emotional Reason: Deliberation, Motivation, and the Nature of Value*. These original affective presentations cannot be reduced to forms of cognition or perception, but they do call for an integrated account that seeks to understand the interactions of affective presentations with perception and cognition, Steinbock, *Moral Emotions: Reclaiming the Evidence of the Heart*. Precisely

The late 1930s saw a remarkable convergence in the ideas of two prominent thinkers, working in very different philosophical contexts, that together form a basis for such an integrated phenomenology of emotions. Jean-Paul Sartre and R. G. Collingwood were both convinced that emotions cannot be adequately grasped simply in terms of what happens to us, but instead must be thought of in terms of activities undertaken in the context of practical life. More specifically, they both argued that emotions should be understood as involving “magical” activity, that is, activity that constitutes and transforms the sense of the lived experience in which action is undertaken. For both Sartre and Collingwood “magic” is given a phenomenological sense, developed in dialogue with the leading anthropology of their day, so that it designates all of the activities and practices that bring about transformations in our lived experience by initiating, developing and sustaining emotions.<sup>4</sup> “Magic” in this sense has a very wide application that goes beyond the contemporary senses of superstitious or pre-scientific attempts to understand and manipulate natural forces, or a form of entertainment in which a magician performs surprising feats. Magic in the basic phenomenological sense used here refers to any practice in which we evoke and sustain emotions for a practical purpose. For example, simple personal rituals, such as wearing a lucky pair of football boots for an important game, can be attempts to evoke and sustain emotional confidence. I explore a number of other examples and types of magic in this sense of affective praxis in Section 3 below, and in Section 4 I show that many of the more specialized senses of the term “magic” are special functions, and often perversions, of this basic phenomenological sense.

In this article I argue for a modified version of the account of emotions that Sartre gives in the *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions*, extending and developing it in the light of Collingwood’s analysis of magic as emotional praxis. Unlike simple passive affects, which we rarely experienced in isolation, emotions are both the objects of practice and are themselves forms of practical activity, i.e. the practice of “magic” just described. My account makes use of the phenomenological notion of intuition as the original presentation of the sense of the world in lived experience, and turns on the idea that emotions are transformations of the sense of the world presented in practical life, i.e. transformations of practical intuition. Practical intuition is the original pre-reflective presentation of a situation in which one conducts oneself, acts or responds.<sup>5</sup> For example, on my way to the shop I hear the shouts of someone in distress. The situation is presented to me in practical intuition as one of various possible ways to go on, primarily as one in which I can continue on my way to my original destination or stop to try to help the stranger in distress. If I feel alarm at the signs of distress my original intuition of a straightforward familiar path to the shop is transformed into a far less determinate situation presenting numerous initially unclear possibilities for lending a hand: Should I check the danger has

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what is distinctive about the intentional structure of emotions and what distinguishes the affective presentation of sense in different emotions is of course subject to intense debate and disagreement amongst phenomenologists of emotion, Helm, “Affective Intentionality and the Reactive Attitudes” 227–28. See also, Szanto and Landweer, “Introduction: The Phenomenology of Emotions- above and beyond ‘What It Is like to Feel’” 10. The account offered here follows Sartre in claiming that it is not the intentional structure itself that is distinctive in emotional intuition, but the *transformational dynamic* between different intuitions of the practical possibilities in a given situation.

<sup>4</sup> Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* 65–77; Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 66, 72.

<sup>5</sup> Sartre insists that the apprehensions of our situation in practical intuition that constitute emotions are originally non-reflective and that many of the errors of psychological accounts of emotion stem from the assumption that emotional consciousness is a form of consciousness of emotion, Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 56–57.

passed? Call an ambulance? Try to give first aid? My emotion here involves the presentation of the situation as posing a problem about what to do and requiring a response in terms of action. In this example my emotion involves a transformation of a determinate practical intuition with the goal of reaching the shop by a familiar path into an indeterminate one of helping the stranger by means yet to be determined.

I try to demonstrate below that the transformative effect of emotions on practical intuition is reversible and constitutes a phenomenon that I call “practical metabolism” because the transformations of practical sense become a continuous cycle of transformation that forms the open-ended basis of practical life (Section 2). I go on to show that this modified Sartrean account can be developed using Collingwood’s understanding of the relationship between emotional expression and magical activity, as set out in *Principles of Art* and in his *Folktales Manuscript* (Section 3).<sup>6</sup> The resulting conception allows for an integrated understanding of the motivating and demotivating dynamics of emotions and the ways that they are constituted in socially mediated magical practices. Finally, I turn to the issue of the appraisal of emotions. Drawing on Sartre’s recognition of false emotions and Collingwood’s analysis of the perversions of magic, I argue that understanding the various possible breakdowns of our practical metabolism gives us a framework for the appraisal of emotions conceived as continuous transformations of open-ended practical concern (Section 4).

The resulting account will, I hope, be of interest for a number of reasons. It aims to contribute the contemporary philosophical interest in both the specificity of emotions and their integration into practical life. It contributes to the lively debates concerning the interpretation Sartre’s early views on emotions that have been reignited in recent years. It aims to introduce Collingwood’s work on magic and emotion to a wider audience and to show the relevance of that work to the phenomenology of emotion. Finally, the account sets out a framework for understanding and appreciating the integral role that magic, understood as affective praxis, continues to play in practical life.

## 2. Practical Intuition and Practical Metabolism

The *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, originally published in 1939, is one of Sartre’s early pre-*Being and Nothingness* works. The sketch critically appraises prominent philosophical and psychological theories of emotion, before briefly outlining a phenomenological conception of emotions that draws upon Sartre’s reading of Husserl and Heidegger. The central claim of Sartre’s *Sketch* is that emotions are transformations of the world. More precisely, Sartre argues that: “All emotions have this in common, that they evoke the appearance of a world, cruel, terrible, bleak, joyful, etc., but in which the relations of things to consciousness are always and exclusively magical.”<sup>7</sup> There are a

<sup>6</sup> Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*; Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment: Studies in Folktales, Cultural Criticism, and Anthropology*. The folktales manuscript was written between 1937 and 1938 and was first published in 2005 as part of the volume *The Philosophy of Enchantment*. The account of magic there forms the basis of the better known account in *Principles of Art*, although its approach is on the whole more phenomenological and less categorical, see Rudzik, “Folklore and History: An Analysis of an Unpublished Manuscript by R.G. Collingwood.” A few studies have explored the significance of this manuscript for Collingwood’s wider philosophical development, but none have done so as part of an attempt to develop an integrated understanding of emotion in practical life, see Connelly, “R. G. Collingwood: From Anthropology to Metaphysics”; Tabrea, “Tradition and Presupposition in Collingwood and Eliade.”

<sup>7</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 81.

huge variety of feelings and valences that appear in the world as presented in emotions, but what they have in common according to Sartre is a certain kind of transformation of the practical sense of the world. For Sartre, as we will see in the following analysis, this transformation amounts to what might be called a “de-determination” of the world, that is, the freeing up of configurations of practical possibility.

My argument in this paper is that emotional transformations of the world are bidirectional and that the two directions of transformation form an integrated practical metabolism. Along with the “de-determination” of the world that Sartre describes there is also emotional re-determination of the world, the consolidation of configurations of practical potential. To take up one of Sartre’s own examples, flight in the face of a ferocious beast may not initially be a prudent escape, but a species of “magical” conduct that attempts “negate the dangerous object with one’s whole body.”<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, what Sartre fails to make clear is that, with the appearance of a tree of convenient climbing height, a wild flight into an indeterminate world is once again transformed and re-determined into a world in which a prudent escape is indeed possible. This second transformation is not a breaking away from emotion by means of rational reflection, but a further development of the pre-reflective emotion itself, with its own concomitant activity that evokes emotions of resoluteness. Thus, I will argue, Sartre is right to say that all emotions are transformations of the world, but wrong to claim that they are all transformations of the first kind.

Sartre focusses almost exclusively on the first kind of de-determining transformation although his account clearly implies the possibility of the second re-determining kind. His theory is that all emotions are transformations towards a world of indeterminate practical potential. A clear problem for that claim is that it makes it difficult to see how emotion relates to activity that successfully navigates determinate practical pathways, i.e. how emotion motivates effective action. Emotions for Sartre are activities that engage with practical difficulty by transforming the world into one in which difficulties are no longer experienced as such. The determinate world throws up obstacles, which are unreflectively taken to be too much to overcome: “The world is *difficult*.”<sup>9</sup> Frustration plays such a key role in Sartre’s analysis that Elpidorou describes him as positing the “primacy of frustration.”<sup>10</sup> Sartre is clear that, whilst emotions are particular kinds of engagement with practical difficulty, they are for him engagements that are always ineffective in the terms of the determinate world in which the difficulty makes its appearance.<sup>11</sup>

Let us take a closer look at what Sartre actually means by the transformation of the world into a magical world. The notion of a magical world is set up in contrast to the world apprehended by someone whose practical endeavours are proceeding more or less in order. For someone in that situation, the world presents itself as a deterministic instrumental complex. Emotion is experienced when that order breaks down in the face of difficulty:

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<sup>8</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 67.

<sup>9</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 62.

<sup>10</sup> Elpidorou, “Emotions in Early Sartre: The Primacy Frustration.”

<sup>11</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 65.

We can now conceive what an emotion is. It is a transformation of the world. When the paths before us become too difficult, or when we cannot see our way, we can no longer put up with such an exacting and difficult world. All ways are barred and nevertheless we must act. So then we try to change the world; that is, to live it as though the relations between things and their potentialities were not governed by deterministic processes but by magic.<sup>12</sup>

Since Sartre presents the onset of emotion as the transformation of a determinate world into a contrasting magical world, one is led to conclude that a magical world is a dissolution of the instrumental complex into a non-deterministic world. Note, however, that the magical world is never identified with an utterly indeterminate chaos in which no meaningful links can be made between one event and another. In pure chaos there can be no sense to the idea of a magical practitioner mysteriously and wondrously bringing about a magical event. Nor can there be any sense in asking how the event was brought about and attempting to answer either in magical terms – such as pointing out an incantation or magical instrument – or in deflationary causal terms. In fact, the very distinction between a “magical explanation” and “causal explanation” fails to take account of the fact that the world is in both cases irreducibly apprehended in the terms of practical intuition.

For practical intuition transformation into a magical world is not a dissolution of determinate causes into pure chaos, but a dissolution of determinate practical pathways into indeterminate practical potential. The determinism of the instrumental world is not causal determinism, but a determinate order of practical possibilities, which Sartre describes as follows:

The means themselves appear to us as potentialities that lay claim to our existence. The apprehension of the means as the one possible path to the attainment of the end (or, if there are  $n$  means, as the  $n$  that alone are possible) may be called the pragmatic intuition of the determinism of the world.<sup>13</sup>

Sartre goes on to provide some helpful images of determinate pragmatic intuition. We can think of this as a world, “all furrowed with straight and narrow paths leading to such and such determinate end” or a “pin table” game in which you guide the ball along paths formed by rows of pins. The contrasting magical world is not an attempt to disengage with the practical world and, in the face of frustration, withdraw into our own fantasy. A magical world should be thought instead as a *pragmatic intuition of the indeterminism of the world*. Here “indeterminism” does not mean without causal determination. It means rather a freer and looser determination of practical potential. In a magical world there are not  $n$  ways to achieve one’s end, whether or not one knows the value of  $n$ . The pathways no longer form a set of determinate value. The world is no longer “furrowed with straight and narrow paths,” but neither is it featureless and without any contour. It is not suddenly possible to reach a destination without taking any path at all, although it might seem that way in contrast to a world of straight and narrow paths. A “magical” pin table would not be one on which balls and pins appear and disappear at random and there is no longer any sense to “guiding” a ball. A magical pin table would instead be without a determinate set of pathways, one where

<sup>12</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 63.

<sup>13</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 62.

pins have ambiguous value in terms of their guiding and obstructing of balls, and the goals are ambiguous in terms of their achievability. Practical determinacy or indeterminacy of this kind is not simply a question of knowledge or lack of knowledge, since the world might present itself as affording  $n$  possibilities without our knowing the value of  $n$ , but in a world of indeterminate potential there is no determinate value of  $n$  for us to know or not know.

This interpretation of what Sartre means by the transformation of practical intuition lends itself naturally to the modification that I want to designate as “practical metabolism.” The idea is that practical-emotive life is characterized by a continuous cycle of reversible transformations of practical intuition; from determinate to indeterminate and from indeterminate to determinate.<sup>14</sup> In this cycle difficulties appear and the ways forward lose their determinacy. Then practical pathways are re-determined, some of which may not have appeared at all in the first set of determinate intuitions. I call this a “metabolism” both because it is a description of practical life that focuses on the changes that our practical intuition continually undergoes rather than considering action in causal terms,<sup>15</sup> and because those changes form a metabolic cycle as practical difficulties are metabolized in de-determining (“catabolic”) and re-determining (“anabolic”) transformations.<sup>16</sup>

Sartre’s interpreters have tended to downplay or even repudiate the structural role that he assigns to “magic.” Robert Solomon, for example, has for many years recognized the significance of Sartre’s idea that emotions are integral to magical practice, but his association of magic with the irrational and his determination to show that emotions are not essentially irrational has led him to deny a structural role for magic in emotion.<sup>17</sup> Others have followed suit, claiming that Sartre thinks of emotions as perversions of consciousness or that he only really deals with a problematic class of emotions.<sup>18</sup> Martin Hartmann has mounted a defence of the *Sketch*, arguing that the critics are misled by an

<sup>14</sup> The idea of practical metabolism that I am developing here has affinities with Heidegger’s analysis of the dynamic of “handiness” and “unhandiness” in Chapter 3 of *Being and Time*. Indeed, I believe it is crucial to understand that dynamic precisely in terms of a continuous cycle of (generally very slight or unnoticed) “breakdowns” and recoveries, rather than as consisting of sustained periods of smoothly running handiness interspersed with periodic catastrophic breakdowns into unhandiness (although more or less catastrophic breakdowns are of course always possible). Further work to determine the potential for integrating Heidegger’s own analysis of attunements and moods, into this framework is likely to be illuminating, as I indicate in the conclusion to this paper. Heidegger’s well-known remarks on “magic and fetishism” as bound up with “primitive Dasein” for whom signs “coincide” with what they indicate, might also add an important, although potentially problematic, dimension to the understanding of magical activity I develop here. Sartre’s own analysis is clearly influenced by his reading of *Being and Time*, although his brief reference to Heidegger in the conclusion of the *Sketch* is itself quite problematic, Heidegger, *Being and Time* 80. Sartre refers to emotion as “one of the great attitudes” or “ways in which consciousness understands (in Heidegger’s sense of *Verstehen*) its Being-in-the-world.” He thus implies that there are other attitudes and ways of understanding that do not involve emotion, which is clearly not Heidegger’s view, Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 91. Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time* §29.

<sup>15</sup> See Tillman, “Acts and Changes: A Metabolic Approach to the Philosophy of Action.” for a complementary approach to the philosophy of action.

<sup>16</sup> It may be objected that this image is in danger of reintroducing the “digestive” image of consciousness that Sartre is at pains to repudiate in his article in praise of Husserl’s notion of intentionality, Sartre, “Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl’s Phenomenology.” I acknowledge that danger, but nevertheless, if we are careful to bear in mind that I introduce it as part of an attempt to describe consciousness’s continuous, active and transformative engagement with the world, rather than its digestive “assimilation” of meaningless data, then I think it is ultimately less problematic than Sartre’s preferred alternative image of consciousness as a series of “bursts,” which is in danger of atomizing and decontextualizing conscious acts.

<sup>17</sup> Solomon, *The Passions* 232–40; Solomon, *Dark Feelings, Grim Thoughts: Experience and Reflection in Camus and Sartre* 93–113.

<sup>18</sup> Wollheim, *On the Emotions*; Gardner, *Sartre’s Being and Nothingness: A Reader’s Guide*.



“epistemological model” of emotion.<sup>19</sup> This line of defence can be further developed by returning to the context of practical life in which Sartre’s phenomenology situates emotions and showing that a deeper reason for Sartre’s sometimes misleading descriptions is that he focuses exclusively on emotions that de-determine practical intuition rather than situating each emotion in a continuous cycle of de-determination and re-determination.<sup>20</sup> Instead of considering emotion as aiming exclusively at the constitution of a “magical world,” we should consider the magical element in emotion as all of those practices that transform the world as practically intuited. As an initial defence of this modification of Sartre’s view I will end this section by arguing that it mitigates three long-standing and interrelated objections to his theory as presented in the *Sketch*.

First, there is the question of whether Sartre considers emotions to be a class of action, and, if he does, whether he is right to do so. There is no doubt that Sartre emphasizes the active elements of emotion, as opposed to the traditional conception that considers emotions to be primarily passive, although some commentators have recently tried to make room for the “affectivity” of emotions in Sartre’s account.<sup>21</sup> Sartre’s account considers emotions as ways of engaging with the difficulties of practical life by working on practical intuition, rather than attempts to *escape* difficulty by ignoring or abandoning the problem.<sup>22</sup> Nor do I think that we should read Sartre’s early understanding of emotion as simply the “cover up” of difficulties, as Daniel Vanello suggests when he argues that we should read “emotion” as misrepresentation and illusory disclosure of the evaluative import of a situation, and “affectivity” as the genuine disclosure of evaluative import.<sup>23</sup> Instead, there remains an internal tension in the disclosive power of emotions that makes them both essential elements of our continuous engagement with situations and yet always in danger of distorting that engagement, as I will argue in more detail in Section 4. Nevertheless, emotional engagement often takes forms that attempt to make the problem go away, as in Sartre’s examples of passive fear expressed in a faint or active fear expressed as flight.<sup>24</sup> Emotions for Sartre involve various types of behaviour and conduct that are directed towards an end (they have “finality”), but are unreflective or pre-reflective.<sup>25</sup> The question of action then is really the question of whether emotional conduct is *effective* as engagement with practical difficulty, and as we have seen the answer for Sartre is that it is not, because he considers emotional conduct as exclusively the de-determination of practical pathways.

My modified Sartrean account allows us to see how emotions remain connected to effective conduct, even when at some particular moment their finality is ineffective. Spontaneous sobbing in an awkward social moment or turning from a charging bear are emotions directed towards annihilating the problem faced by consciousness. They may not be effective in themselves but in certain circumstances, when no determinate

<sup>19</sup> Hartmann, “A Comedy We Believe In: A Further Look at Sartre’s Theory of Emotions” 146.

<sup>20</sup> Barnes, “Sartre on the Emotions.” anticipates some aspects of this defence, arguing that the view of affectivity as integral to effective praxis is implicit in Sartre’s early work and fully developed in his later work. However, it is the early emphasis on emotion as transformation of the determinacy of practical intuitions that I think we need to maintain.

<sup>21</sup> Hartmann, “A Comedy We Believe In: A Further Look at Sartre’s Theory of Emotions”; Hatzimoyisis, “Sartre and Affectivity.”

<sup>22</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 43–44.

<sup>23</sup> Vanello, “Sartre’s Theory of Motivation” 260.

<sup>24</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 66–67.

<sup>25</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 61.



paths present themselves, they can open up a moment of leeway. In that moment it is possible to “gather oneself,” even as one seems to be falling apart, to consider the indeterminate contours of the situation and to move to a second moment of transformation in which the world is re-determined and one can then choose a potentially effective path. Sobbing, whilst clearly preventing effective action in some circumstances, may at other times afford one leeway in which hitherto inconceivable responses can make an appearance. To return to the example of active fear and flight from a ferocious beast, the flight is not in itself an act of pure prudence, but again it may give one a moment of indeterminate leeway in which pathways to shelter can present themselves.

The second question that this modified account helps us to address is whether Sartre’s introduction of a second type of emotion ultimately renders his account inconsistent. There are, Sartre claims towards the end of the *Sketch*:

[...] two forms of emotion, according to whether it is we who constitute the magic of the world to replace a deterministic activity which cannot be realized, or whether the world itself is unrealizable and reveals itself suddenly as a magical environment.<sup>26</sup>

Sartre’s example of the second type is of horror at a face that suddenly appears at the window. Some commentators have argued that this second type of emotion cannot be accommodated by the view of emotion as conduct that constitutes a magical world,<sup>27</sup> whilst others have defended the consistency of Sartre’s account.<sup>28</sup> At issue here is the primacy of active conduct in bringing about the indeterminate “magical” intuition in each case, an issue again related to the relative activity or passivity of emotions. Whether or not we judge Sartre’s text to be consistent, the modification that I propose suggests that we need not see the two types of emotion as inconsistent. The two types can be thought in terms of the two directions of transformation in a continuous cycle for transformations between determinate and indeterminate practical intuitions. If emotional conduct is a response to and transformation of our determinate and indeterminate intuitions, then what appeared to Sartre to be “two types” of emotion are in fact emotions that begin on the one hand in a moment of relative determinacy, and, on the other hand, in the moment or relative indeterminacy. The practical world is not initially or primarily “instrumental” or “magical,” but a continual cycle of transformation between the two. The two types of emotion are better understood as transformations from a more to a less determined world and from a less to a more determined world.<sup>29</sup>

The idea that transformation of the world in practical metabolism is relative and continuous brings us to the third point of contention. Critics have argued that Sartre’s *Sketch* presents us with a “two world” theory of emotions, that both draws the distinction between these worlds too sharply and makes it difficult to see how events in a fully

<sup>26</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 86.

<sup>27</sup> Solomon, *Dark Feelings, Grim Thoughts: Experience and Reflection in Camus and Sartre*; Richmond, “Magic in Sartre’s Early Philosophy.”

<sup>28</sup> Elpidorou, “Horror, Fear, and the Sartrean Account of Emotions”; Hartmann, “A Comedy We Believe In: A Further Look at Sartre’s Theory of Emotions.”

<sup>29</sup> This solution to the “two types” problem contrasts with that proposed by Elpidorou, “Horror, Fear, and the Sartrean Account of Emotions,” who suggests that we can maintain the consistency of Sartre’s account by dropping the requirement that emotion involves a transformation of practical intuition and maintaining that emotions involve either such a transformation or behaviour within an already constituted magical world. My proposal makes transformation essential in both cases, considering all actions and emotions as moments of transformation in an open-ended context and drawing into question the idea that the world is ever fully constituted as instrumental or magical.

determinate world can motivate a transformation into an indeterminate world.<sup>30</sup> In Sartre's defence Hartmann has again suggested that these criticisms are uncharitable.<sup>31</sup> Emphasizing that reflection does not interpose in emotional transformations Sartre himself says: "There may be continuous passage from the non-reflective consciousness 'instrumental world' (action) to the non-reflective consciousness 'hateful world' (anger). The latter is a transformation of the former."<sup>32</sup> If that is so, then it is possible to argue that Sartre does not propose a "two world thesis" at all, but rather uses the terms "instrumental" and "magical" to name the one and only practical world at different moments in its continuous transformation. On that reading it is not a great stretch to the idea that the continuous transformation goes both ways and forms a cyclical practical metabolism of emotional transformation.

### 3. Dances, Spells and Taboo: Magic as Affective Praxis

Having set out the notion of practical metabolism and given some initial reasons for thinking that the concept gives us a more complete understanding of the integration emotions into practical life than Sartre's account alone, in this section I will develop the concept more fully by drawing on Collingwood's thinking of magic as the practice of emotion. I begin by showing that Sartre's and Collingwood's views can be plausibly and fruitfully combined. I go on to argue that doing so gives us a fuller account of the role of magical activity in the twofold emotional transformation of the world that I have called practical metabolism, together with a better appreciation of the socially mediated magical practices that evoke those transformations.

It is striking that both Sartre and Collingwood link the expression of emotion with an attempt to show that magical activity is a ubiquitous and necessary feature of practical life.<sup>33</sup> Whilst a handful of commentators have made the connection between Collingwood and Sartre before, there has been no substantial comparative analysis of the two thinkers. Spencer Wertz notes the similarity between Collingwood's anthropology of emotions and Sartre's theory of emotions as transformations of situations.<sup>34</sup> Louis Mink suggested a more specific convergence between Collingwood's notion of the "corruption of consciousness" and Sartre's notion of "bad faith."<sup>35</sup> The same connection was made later by James Gilman, who argued that corruption of consciousness is the most enduring feature of Collingwood's analysis of Nazism's desire for magical expression in the context of modernity's disenchantment.<sup>36</sup> I follow up these connections in Section 4 below, where I argue that thinking in terms of practical metabolism allows

<sup>30</sup> Fell III, *Emotion in the Thought of Sartre*; Cogan, "Emotion and Sartre's Two Worlds." Barrett, "The Rational and the Emotional: A Defence of Sartre's Theory of the Emotions." defends the separation of the "two worlds," but does so by implausibly aligning instrumental intuitions with cognition, reflection and rationality.

<sup>31</sup> Hartmann, "A Comedy We Believe In: A Further Look at Sartre's Theory of Emotions" 151.

<sup>32</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 58.

<sup>33</sup> As should become clear Collingwood's account of magical expression undermines any possible distinction between expressivist/emotivist approaches and instrumental/functionalist approaches, which is key to his affinity with Sartre. Heikki Saari, for example, criticizes Collingwood on a number of points that stem from the claim that he draws too sharp a distinction between "emotive" and "instrumental" accounts of magic and also that he downplays, "the social nature of magical practices and their communal consequences," "R. G. Collingwood's Emotivist Theory of Magic" 106. Such criticisms could not possibly remain plausible following the publication of the *Folktales Manuscript*.

<sup>34</sup> Wertz, *Food and Philosophy: Selected Essays* 166.

<sup>35</sup> Mink, *Mind, History and Dialectic: The Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood* 11.

<sup>36</sup> Gilman, "R. G. Collingwood and the Religious Sources of Nazism" 119.

us to understand how the structure of emotional praxis itself tends towards distinct but related kinds of breakdown and perversion. In this section I lay the groundwork for understanding what can go wrong in magical expression by drawing on Collingwood's phenomenologically rich descriptions to show how a functioning practical metabolism works in practice.

One potential objection to this argument is that Collingwood's understanding of magic as the evocation of motivating emotion cannot be made to fit with my modified Sartrean account because it lacks the key phenomenological insight that emotion is a transformation *of the world*, that is, a transformation of the *meaning* of the entire practical context presented in practical intuition. Collingwood uses a number of different images to model practical motivation. Perhaps the best known of these is the image of a dynamo, producing energy that can be discharged in action.<sup>37</sup> Since it is the claim that emotion transforms the world that is distinctive of Sartre's account, rather than thinking of emotion as the discharge of energy into a ready-made world, one might wonder whether Collingwood's approach can be considered phenomenological.<sup>38</sup> In *Principles of Art* Collingwood aims at upholding categorial distinctions (principally between "craft" and "expression") that result in his holding magic to be the craft of producing (or "arousing") emotions for practical motivation. The idea of production of emotion may in part explain the use of the dynamo image in that text. Yet even in the less theoretically driven *Folktales Manuscript* Collingwood already uses images related to the dynamo; in particular, he frequently refers to magic as the generation of emotion to be "discharged" in practical activity.<sup>39</sup>

However, it is not only images of energetics that Collingwood deploys to describe the role of emotion in practical life. He also uses images of "crystallisation," "consolidation" and "canalisation" of emotion into practical pathways. These images suggest more readily that emotions are transformations of the world in Sartre's sense. This is what Collingwood has to say about a war-dance:

The war-dance does not effect a catharsis of the warlike emotions: on the contrary, it *crystallizes* them as emotions, and confirms the dancer's resolution to discharge them *through the channel* of action.<sup>40</sup>

The image of crystallization suggests that the emotions in question were fluid intuitions of practical potential before they are crystallized into determinate pathways in the course of the dance. There was fluid potential for the appropriate martial action, but it was not crystallized into the pathways of this particular battle. The dance crystallizes those pathways and, one might even say, the battle begins with the dance. Magic involves an apprehension of the world with its fluid and loosely laid out contours of action together with activity that crystallizes emotion and in doing so canalizes the pathways of action.

<sup>37</sup> Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* 69.

<sup>38</sup> I cannot give a complete defence of Collingwood's phenomenological credentials here. For studies that argue for the convergence of Collingwood's approach and method with phenomenology see Rubino, "Religion and the Rapprochement between Thought and Action" 95; Stanage, "Collingwood's Phenomenology of Education: Person and the Self-Recognition of Mind"; Eisenstein, *Phenomenology of Civilisation: Reason as a Regulative Principle in Collingwood and Husserl*; Reda, "Specular Phenomenology: Art and Art Criticism."

<sup>39</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 200–05; 227–28.

<sup>40</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 228, my emphasis. See also 231–32; cf. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* 66, 75.

Like Sartre, Collingwood was in part responding to Freud and he picks up Freud's use of energetics imagery. Yet at the same time Collingwood clearly sees that emotional transformation requires an account in terms of meaning. Robert Solomon draws an influential distinction between "hydraulic" and "meaning" models of emotion and highlights Freud's vacillation between the two.<sup>41</sup> The apparent vacillation might, however, be understood as an attempt to model the dynamic structures of meaning. This is what Collingwood does by deploying these images, and I have done so in turn by deploying the physiological model of metabolism. In Collingwood's case the dynamo image seems designed to pick up on the popular understanding of motivation, and thus might charitably be interpreted as an attempt to shift that understanding towards a meaning-based account.

Magic then, for both Sartre and Collingwood, is activity that brings about the emotional transformation of practical intuition. For Sartre, emotion is the world transformed or revealed as practically indeterminate, and thus for him the indeterminate world is a "magical world." For Collingwood, magic is the set of activities that result in a practically determinate world, one in which motivation is the crystallization or canalization of practical pathways. If we combine these two moments of magical activity we have a complete practical metabolism.

What Collingwood's historical and aesthetic method also adds to Sartre's account is a fuller understanding of the various kinds of magical activity that are involved in both directions for transformation that form our practical metabolism. Emotional responses are spontaneous, but that spontaneity always takes place within a social situation with its existing magic rituals and ways of expressing emotion. As Hartmann argues, emotion is expressed in a world that is already emotionally structured.<sup>42</sup> Magical expression may be spontaneous and unreflective, but it does not take place in isolated moments; it has social significance in relation to social practices. Those practices may or may not be formally instituted into the fabric of society. The practical expression of emotion and magical activity can be relatively simple, such as carrying a personal lucky charm, or it can have a complex structure in which spontaneous responses form habits and social institutions, such as communal dancing rituals.

Sartre does stress the importance of the social *situation* that informs and is informed by emotions. However, in the *Sketch* he describes isolated situations, as though social life consisted of a series of vignettes from a single point of view, rather than a social field involving shared emotional transformations. What Sartre does emphasize is the embodiment of magical expressions in the form of incantation and dance. Thus, when discussing joy, which he initially puts forward as a potential counter-example to his claim that emotion is a response to practical difficulty, Sartre argues that through incantation and dance, joy becomes an attempt to realize the impossible: "to realize the possession of the desired object as an instantaneous totality."<sup>43</sup> The activity works symbolically: "To dance, or to sing, for joy – these represent the behaviour of symbolic approximation, of incantation."<sup>44</sup> He then notes the huge variety of emotional expressions that are not exhausted by such examples, but claims that embodied symbolical modes of expression

<sup>41</sup> Solomon, *The Passions* 139–50.

<sup>42</sup> Hartmann, "A Comedy We Believe In: A Further Look at Sartre's Theory of Emotions" 152.

<sup>43</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 72.

<sup>44</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 72.

are nevertheless pervasive: “We are only affirming that [emotions] are all reducible to the constitution of a magic world, by making use of our bodies as instruments of incantation.”<sup>45</sup> The bodily incantations that Sartre uses as examples are not obviously set in the midst of custom and tradition, although it is clear that their “symbolical” power must derive from such a setting.

Collingwood is far more focussed on the customs and traditions of magical expression. He describes four groupings of magical custom and belief in the *Folktales Manuscript*, analysing their basic structures and showing their complex interrelations and potential for cross-contamination. He designates these groupings as: (i) those concerned with the “external soul” or “outposts of the personality”; (ii) those connected with ritual ablutions; (iii) those arising out of the use of tools; (iv) those that anthropologists group under the term “taboo.”<sup>46</sup> In each case Collingwood gives descriptions of emotional responses in both “primitive” and “modern” contexts, with the aim of showing that, “the magical practice has its basis in emotions which are universally human and can be verified as existing, and even sometimes as giving rise to definite customs, in and among ourselves.”<sup>47</sup> For instance, practices concerned with the “external soul” range from the ritual destruction of an enemy’s discarded nail clippings, as an attempt to discourage that enemy along the lines of disfiguring a portrait, to the customary wearing of hats in Edwardian society, as symbolic protection when going out into society. In each instance, and in all of these groupings, one can immediately see that the emotional expression takes place in response to – and as a way of shaping – the social situation. The social situation has its own history, so that even if the emotions can be shown to be universally human, they do not always give rise to definite customs; and when they do, those customs can take radically different forms.<sup>48</sup>

Magical practices are formed through the social mediation of relatively immediate emotional expressions. Such mediations can be understood as generating a field of shared and often conflicting transformations or metabolic exchanges. In the case of magical “attacks” such as the ritual destruction of nail clippings, Collingwood describes the immediate expressions of two persons. The first person feels that something forming an outpost of his personality must be cherished, “protecting it from accidental or malicious damage.”<sup>49</sup> A second person expresses anger or repugnance towards another by damaging or disrespectfully treating something cherished by their enemy. However, emotional expressions of this kind do not tend to remain isolated events. Fully fledged magical attacks occur when performed in an open-ended social situation, incorporating these two relatively immediate expressions:

In this situation, the established habits of society, based on the emotional facts already described, are such that the victim knows and fears that the agent is acting in this way, and consequently sustains injury in the shape of mortification and whatever consequences this implies.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 73.

<sup>46</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 221–22.

<sup>47</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 221.

<sup>48</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 198.

<sup>49</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 119.

<sup>50</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 200.

Magical attack of this kind incorporates habitual expression and intentional action, with the potential to form institutionalized rituals. These social practices in turn form a context for the formation of new habits of expression. That there are different layers of emotional expression and magical activity entails that there is never a total transformation of practical intuition from an absolutely “instrumental” to a “magical” world. In the case just described the “mortification” of the injured party is an indefinite sense of injury to the self: how can/should I go on when parts of the world so intimate to me are open to control and manipulation by others? Yet the ritual undertaken to bring about that mortification, and thus emotional injury, can follow very definite and defined practical pathways to the goal of such mortification. The spell transforms the world in two directions at once: for the enchanted the world becomes difficult and indefinite, for the magician it forms a definite set of potential pathways to magical injury of the enemy.

Conflict in direction of transformation can also arise in one’s own immediate expression, and is then built into the social practices that form the medium of expression. Collingwood describes the conflicted emotions of those grieving for a dead relative or spouse. On the one hand they are overwhelmed by a feeling of loss that their emotions no longer have a “channel” in which to express themselves; on the other hand, they realize that they will need to form new relationships and find new channels for such self-expression.<sup>51</sup> Practical activity and emotional life are caught between dissolution and the requirement for resolution. In so far as they act on the second requirement, transforming an indeterminate into a determinate practical intuition, they feel guilt at their betrayal of the dead and are haunted by them. This is the basic emotional conflict at the heart of the multitude of customs and beliefs involving ghosts and haunting. The framework of practical metabolism allows us to see the phenomenal structure of such conflicts. These emotional expressions and concomitant magical activity are caught between the two directions of transformation in practical metabolism.

A functioning practical metabolism is thus not a perfectly smooth cycle of transformations of practical intuition from a single perspective. Collingwood is alive to the complexities and tensions that arise in the functioning of practical metabolism. He thinks of magic as a continuous practical activity that not only helps us to navigate practical situations but also to transform them. Henry Harris has complained that Collingwood’s energetics images exclude many practical applications of magical activity: “Magic is not only a ‘dynamo’; it is can also be a ‘tune-up.’”<sup>52</sup> Harris reminds us that together with production of emotion, magic often involves the management of emotion and thus takes on not only a directly motivational but also a therapeutic role. In the *Folktales Manuscript*, published after Harris made this objection, Collingwood shows that he was well aware of the potential for magic to effect an emotional “tune-up”:

[...] magical practices are not utilitarian activities based on scientific theories whether true or false, but spontaneous expressions of emotion whose utility, so far as they have any utility, lies in the fact that they resolve emotional conflicts in the agent and so readjust him to the practical life for which these conflicts render him unfitted [...]<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 202.

<sup>52</sup> Harris, “Magic and Society in Collingwood’s Aesthetics” 15.

<sup>53</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 208.



Motivation effected by magic is not a question of generating a context-independent energy, but involves the expression of emotion as the transformation of socially mediated situations of conflict and frustration.

The various types of magical activity that Collingwood analyses all involve the complex interplay of potentially conflicting emotional responses and the incorporation of immediate expression into social mediation. When it comes to the category “taboo,” the distinction between immediate expression and social mediation closes up entirely, whilst the conflict between the determinate and indeterminate transformations of practical intuition remains at the heart of social life. Collingwood argues that taboo is best understood as “emotional sanction.” He contrasts this with both legal and moral sanction, since the action is not prosecuted and punished by officers of the law, nor thought to be in itself inherently wrong. It is simply the disapproval felt by those who break a social convention, however innocently.<sup>54</sup> The “primitive” and “modern” examples he offers are, firstly a Polynesian tribesman refraining from eating pigs outside of ritual feasting for which they have been reserved, through fear of social ostracism; and secondly, the “intolerable atmosphere of disapproval” felt by a young man who arrives at a formal dinner party in flannels. Taboo forms a special yet ubiquitous group of magical expressions whose direct intentional object is the emotional state of the other *and* for which the medium of expression is nothing but the emotional conduct itself.

Towards the end of the *Sketch* Sartre too gives a brief indication of the ubiquitous magical activity and emotional conflict found in social interaction. For him, situations involving only things can be relatively in control and consolidated, so as to be reasonably described in terms of the game of guiding the ball through the pins. But the face of the other is never consolidated in that way: “It follows that man is always a sorcerer to man and the social world is primarily magical.”<sup>55</sup> This observation is precisely what Collingwood’s analysis of taboo substantiates. Yet what Collingwood reveals, by situating magical expressions of emotion in open-ended practical activity, is that there is never in practice a completely “magical” world, any more than there is ever a completely “instrumental” world. At most the two worlds might be held out as idealized completions of what are in practice always incomplete intuitions, idealizations that help us to gauge the current direction of transformation. As I will argue in the next section, such idealizations, when made into ends in themselves, form the basis of structural pathologies in practical and emotional life.

#### 4. Metabolic Breakdown: False Emotions and Perversions of Magic

Both Sartre and Collingwood use their descriptions of emotional transformations of practical intuition to outline distinctive ways of understanding the dynamic structure of practical life and its disturbances. The integration of their approaches in the notion of practical metabolism allows us to produce a new and more comprehensive description of these phenomena.

##### (a) False Emotion and Bad Faith in Sartre

<sup>54</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 222–23.

<sup>55</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 85. See, Van der Wielen, “The Magic of the Other: Sartre on Our Relation with Others in Ontology and Experience.”



For many of Sartre's readers it has been at least uncertain whether there can be, on his account, any such thing as a healthy emotional life. A clear line of development can be traced from the analysis of emotions in the *Sketch* to the analysis of bad faith in *Being and Nothingness*.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, Sartre uses some of the same terms to describe them both, such as the claim that emotion and bad faith are like putting oneself to sleep.<sup>57</sup> Sadness features as one of the examples of bad faith in *Being and Nothingness* and Sartre refers his readers back to the *Sketch* in that passage.<sup>58</sup> When Sartre describes the origin of emotion as "spontaneous debasement of consciousness in the face of the world,"<sup>59</sup> it is clear why a long line of critics holds his descriptions to apply only to "extreme" or "malformed" emotions.<sup>60</sup> As mentioned above, Solomon takes "magic" to signify self-deceptive emotional conduct, arguing in a more recent analysis of the *Sketch* that we should modify Sartre's account by removing the requirement that emotional transformations of the world necessarily involve magic.<sup>61</sup> My proposal, on the contrary, is that we focus on the behaviours and rituals of magic that Sartre describes as part and parcel of the transformation of practical intuition. These transformations do not reach a point of completion in a wholly indeterminate magical world. "Magic" is not a state of self-deception, since self-deception is for Sartre itself a continuous and unstable activity. Neither is magical activity aimed at producing a particular emotional state, but rather the continuous and open-ended de-determination and re-determination of practical intuition. Thus the dynamic structure of practical life incorporates various tendencies towards self-deception but is not self-deceptive as such.

Sartre views emotion as an ineluctable feature of human life, since consciousness cannot have its defining intentional structure unless it assumes some passivity, and thus "abases itself," in the face of the world.<sup>62</sup> A healthy emotional life is not a life that, *per impossible*, avoids all emotion.<sup>63</sup> Rather, a healthy emotional life is alive to the intrinsic possibilities of bad faith that emotional expression harbours, e.g. the acting out of "false" emotions that do not enact a transformation of the world, or clinging to the experience of one's emotions by deeming them the result of states or qualities of the self.<sup>64</sup>

#### (b) Collingwood on the Perversion of Magic

Collingwood's notion of the "corruption of consciousness," when emotional expression is blocked or misunderstood, corresponds in many ways to Sartre's notion of bad faith.<sup>65</sup> In the context of his discussions of practical expression of emotion in magical activity, however, Collingwood refers not to the corruption of consciousness *per se*, but to a set of intrinsic "perversions" of magical activity.

<sup>56</sup> Walker, "Sartre and Sour Grapes"; Heldt, "The Magical and Bad Faith: Reflection, Desire and the Image of Value."

<sup>57</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 78; Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* 115.

<sup>58</sup> Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* 105.

<sup>59</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 79.

<sup>60</sup> Fell III, *Emotion in the Thought of Sartre*, Wollheim, *On the Emotions*.

<sup>61</sup> Solomon, *The Passions* 232–40; Solomon, *Dark Feelings, Grim Thoughts: Experience and Reflection in Camus and Sartre* 110.

<sup>62</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 79.

<sup>63</sup> Hartmann, "A Comedy We Believe In: A Further Look at Sartre's Theory of Emotions."

<sup>64</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 75; Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* 105.

<sup>65</sup> Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* 284–85.

The basic structure of magical perversion according to Collingwood is:

[...] the false belief that when we have expressed the emotions instigating a certain course of action we have as good as done the corresponding action itself: the belief that the fruits of action can be enjoyed by merely expressing our desire for them.<sup>66</sup>

Such a belief, we may surmise, need not be reflective or explicitly articulated. In fact, it seems likely that it is a belief that will rarely if ever be articulated in its own right; rather it will be manifest in the expression together with the failure to act that constitute the perversion. Explicit articulation would tend to undermine one's ability to hold the belief, which is one of the features that such perversions share with bad faith. Furthermore, the belief in question is no arbitrary failure, but bound to the structure of magical expressions as practical motivation, since such expressions are not disconnected preludes to action, but the initiation of a course of action. The perversion of magic is the initiation of action that gets caught up in its own initial phase and thus fails to follow through on what has been initiated. If we consider such perversions in terms of malfunctioning practical metabolism, they occur whenever transformation of practical intuition becomes unidirectional and cut off from the open-ended context of practical concern.

Collingwood subjects this basic structure of magical perversion to further analysis that corresponds well with a phenomenological analysis of the intentionality of practical intuition. Perversions fall into two types depending up whether one's misunderstanding amounts to a misconception of how magic relates to its objects or of how it relates to the person who performs it. These two types of perversion will be intimately connected, since action is one undivided whole, whether considered from the side of the object or from the side of the agent ("intentional object" and "intentional act" in phenomenological terms). The "objective" perversion comprises all those cases where magical expressions are thought to achieve concrete goals directly without further action, since they are experienced as actions complete in themselves. This perversion leads to interpretations of magic as "pseudo-science" and "primitive technology," associated with early anthropological thinkers such as Edward Tylor and James Frazer. Those interpretations are misleading according to Collingwood, but they do capture something of the truth because they describe a ubiquitous form of magical perversion. Spells and rituals are substituted for the action they should initiate and those subject to this perversion may also persuade themselves that such expressions are not only effective in their own right, but also afford them superhuman powers.<sup>67</sup>

A "subjective" perversion, on the other hand, subverts an action by confusing the kind of expression or intentional act in which one is engaged. A tension arises here between magic and other types of artistic expression. In Collingwood's terms art has the potential to "earth" emotion by providing an adequate expression of one's being in a particular situation, whilst magical art must come to fruition in a complete action. Thus, if one were to settle for a poetic cursing of the river that has flooded one's farm then the magical expression of emotion has been perverted by making it into art; in functioning magic the curse needs to serve as the initiation of action, such as building an

<sup>66</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 321.

<sup>67</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 231–32.

embankment. Objective perversions are illusions of unmediated influence through imagined techniques, whilst subjective perversions are wish-fulfilment fantasies.<sup>68</sup>

### (c) Breakdowns of Practical Metabolism

If we consider emotional breakdowns in practical life and their concomitant perversions of magical activity in terms of the notion of practical metabolism I have set out above, this will give us a new perspective on such phenomena; allowing us to accommodate these insights from Sartre and Collingwood and appreciate the twofold role of emotional transformation in the open-ended context of praxis, rather than as a series of discrete episodes.

Practical metabolism describes the dynamic structure of praxis as the reciprocal and cyclical transformation of practical intuition through magical activity: the “de-determination” of that intuition in which practical potential is experienced as indeterminate but not entirely amorphous; and the “re-determination” of practical intuition as the motivating concretization or crystallization of our practical pathways. The emotions of practical life are thus a continuous and coherent cycle of transformations in practical intuition. These transformations and reconfigurations of our world of potential allow us to continually adjust to the difficulties of the situation, as in the earlier example of a war-dance that initiates the dancer into the world of the battle, where they must be both flexible and resolute. Each transformation will to one degree or another disturb an established intuition, but such disturbances are not in themselves problematic. Problems arise when we find ourselves unwilling or unable to facilitate and endure further emotional transformations.

The twofold structure of practical metabolism entails two kinds of emotional incapacity and related perversions of magical activity. On the one hand, practical life becomes one-sided for those who are focused exclusively on addressing difficulty by freeing up the rigid pathways of practical potential. On the other hand, practical life is equally one-sided for those who insist that a “practical attitude” could only ever involve following one set of predetermined pathways towards a clearly determined goal. The first one-sidedness draws the imaginative side of practical life towards escapist fantasy.<sup>69</sup> The second one-sidedness tends to eschew any imaginative and emotional de-canalization of practical potential, insisting that we must stay on the straight and narrow pathways that have already been determined, risking the inability to reconfigure the practical landscape.

Magical activity is “perverted,” in terms of the view I have developed here, when it no longer facilitates emotional transformation of practical intuition, but instead is undertaken in an attempt to hold on to either of these “realist” or “fantasist” worlds. Consider again the magical dances described by Sartre and Collingwood. A dance of joy, according to Sartre, is a magical attempt to “possess” symbolically a desired object completely in an “instantaneous moment,” when the possibilities of the situation could never all be

<sup>68</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 233.

<sup>69</sup> O'Shiel, “Sartre's Magical Being: An Introduction by Way of an Example.” Emotion remains distinct from pure imagination in that the latter either negates or neutralizes what it posits, whilst the former presents us with a situation we believe in as the situation in which we must act, see Sartre, *The Imaginary* 11. Nevertheless, imagination forms an integral element of the situation, which is negotiated by way of emotional transformation, Webber, “Philosophical Introduction” to *The Imaginary*, xxvi. See also Hatzimoyis, “Sartre and Affectivity” concerning the connection and apparent tension between Sartre's early accounts of emotion and imagination.

fulfilled. A dance of joy following the receipt of a declaration of love is an attempt to deal with the ungraspable multiplicity of possibilities that the declaration affords its recipient in an activity celebrating and constituting this moment of indeterminacy.<sup>70</sup> Collingwood's description of a war-dance takes the activity of the dance to be the "crystallisation" of war-like emotion and "confirmation of the dancer's resolution to discharge them through the channel of action."<sup>71</sup> Thus we have dancing that facilitates transformation of practical intuition in the first instance towards a de-determining of practical pathways and in the second instance toward a re-determining of those pathways. In each instance the dancing might be "perverted" when it does not facilitate any such transformation, but instead attempts to block or subvert transformation. In the case of the lover's dance, a determined realist might dance only to show how much they have been affected by the declaration of love. This blocks the expanded, indeterminate, seemingly "endless" possibilities that the moment of joy brings. Of course, as Sartre warns us, that is far from all that there is to love and the attempt to hold fast to the moment of joy and deny the need to act concretely "through countless details (smiles, little attentions, etc.),"<sup>72</sup> would be an equal and opposite perversion. In the case of the war-dance, perversion occurs in Collingwood's terms if, in a situation of war, the dance ends up absorbing war-like emotion rather than initiating battle. Seen in the open context of practical metabolism, further possibilities and complexities arise. The dance channels the warriors' attention towards the enemy and in the repetition of ritualized actions of battle the warriors rehearse the pathways that determine their practical intuition. However, if the dance leaves the dancers with a fixed and immutable determination they will be ill-equipped to deal with the vicissitudes of the battle as it unfolds. A truly effective dance must therefore also build in an open responsiveness to the unfolding situation by allowing space for the de-determination of practical intuition. It might do that through interaction of dancers, or in a dance like the Maori haka, through responsiveness to the enemy towards whom the dance is directed. A rigidly ritualized war-dance will not ready a warrior for battle any better than a free improvisation.

Perversion of magical activity and stilted emotions result in a practical life that fails to incorporate the tensions that arise from the dual necessities of practical metabolism. A healthy emotional life, both personally and socio-historically speaking, will not elide or attempt to overcome those tensions, but develop forms of expression that incorporate open-ended transformations of indeterminacy and determination.

## 5. Conclusion

Drawing on Collingwood's account of magical activity, I have set the phenomena that Sartre investigates in the *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* in the context of open-ended and cyclical transformations of the world that constitute the dynamic structure of practical life. Describing indeterminate practical intuition as a "magical world," as Sartre does, is misleading because any such intuition forms only one moment in the dynamic of practical metabolism. We should therefore distinguish that sense of magic

<sup>70</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 72–73.

<sup>71</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 228.

<sup>72</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 73.

as indeterminate practical intuition from magical activity as emotional expressions that both determine and de-determine practical intuition. Whilst each emotion, as transformation of the world, may tend towards a completely determined or indeterminate world, problematic emotional disturbances of practical life come about when we feel and believe that the transformation is indeed complete. Then, as Sartre writes, “Liberation can come only from a purifying reflection or from the total disappearance of the emotional situation,”<sup>73</sup> but for the most part such liberation from the transformative power of emotion is neither necessary nor desirable.

I have argued that the phenomenal structure of practical metabolism can incorporate the dynamic and affective tensions that arise in practical life without homogenizing the vast array of distinct emotions. I have also shown that the concept of practical metabolism allows us to undertake the appraisal of emotions in terms of the open-ended context of practical life, rather than as a disjointed series of affective events. Thinking of the emotions in these terms will allow for further investigation of other affective experiences and their structural relations to magical practices and behaviour. Twenty-first century social and political life abounds with often very problematic “magical” thought and conduct, from climate change denial to manipulation of behaviour by social media platforms. The answer to such “perverted” magic is not to try to extirpate magical behaviour and its concomitant emotional transformations from our lives, since they form the very core of practical life itself. The idea of practical metabolism I have developed here, by combining insights from Sartre and Collingwood, gives us a framework for the phenomenological analysis of how these perversions arise and how they are sustained.

This framework also helps us to develop a fully integrated understanding of the emotions. Both Sartre and Collingwood consider their functional accounts of emotion to be inseparable from intentional accounts of affectivity. Thinking of magical activity as constitutive of the transformation of practical intuition leads to an integrated approach that neither separates emotional behaviour from affectivity, nor distinguishes the “third person” functional account of emotions found in the *Sketch* from a “first person” intentional account.<sup>74</sup> As Collingwood puts it: “The feeling and the custom are not two separate things which can be related as cause and effect. There is only one thing. The custom is the outward side of it, the feeling the inward side.”<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, more detailed analysis is needed of how the two sides seem to come apart in false emotions and perversions of magic.

More broadly, the phenomenal structure I have set out focuses on emotions as they play out in the midst of practical life. There are significant areas of affective experience which, whilst not strictly emotions in this sense, would be amenable to further investigation in the light of the structure of practical metabolism. Heidegger’s “fundamental attunements” and what Matthew Radcliffe calls “existential feelings” are experiences, and often disturbances, of practical life and the constitution of practical intuition as such, rather than transformations of practical intuition and its activity.<sup>76</sup> These moods

<sup>73</sup> Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* 81.

<sup>74</sup> Hartmann, “A Comedy We Believe In: A Further Look at Sartre’s Theory of Emotions” 157; Hatzimoyssis, “Sartre and Affectivity.”

<sup>75</sup> Collingwood, *The Philosophy of Enchantment* 211.

<sup>76</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time* 178–83; Radcliffe, *Feelings of Being: Phenomenology, Psychiatry and the Sense of Reality*.

confront us with practical life and its limits in ways that never entirely disengage us from the practical situation, and a further elaboration of practical metabolism would need to consider the dynamic relations between emotions and fundamental moods. Temperament too, whilst not itself a transformative emotion, might be fruitfully considered in this framework as the rate and rhythm of emotional transformation. Further comparative work on the parallel intellectual development of Sartre and Collingwood may well help in this regard. Their respective accounts of imagination and art, bad faith and the corruption of consciousness, and even their apparently divergent social and political thought, all draw on their understanding of emotions and are likely to provide provocative material for further reflection on the integral relations between emotion, action and practical life.

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