



Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge

C. D. BROAD

CHARLIE DUNBAR BROAD

1887-1971

CHARLIE DUNBAR BROAD was born on 30 December 1887 at Harlesden on the borders of what was then rural Middlesex. His father's family had been masons and builders long established in and around Bristol. Broad's grandfather became a wealthy man and a convert to Methodism and removed his family to the Surrey suburbs of London. At his death in 1866 each member of the family was very well provided for by the terms of a trust. However, something went wrong with the administration of the Trust: one member of the family hurriedly emigrated to America and Broad's father found it necessary to earn some part of his livelihood by becoming a wine merchant. But the upset was not permanent and the Trust continued to be the basis of a comfortable competence for all Broad's many uncles and aunts and their offspring—with a marked tendency for wealth to move in Broad's direction as time went by. Of his father, Broad tells us that he was more interested in science than in Methodism and that he often preferred that decisions should be taken by his wife rather than that he should oppose her powerful wishes. Broad's mother, Emily Gomme, was the daughter of an architect and property owner: a woman of great energy and enterprise. Her affection for her only child knew no bounds and she was clearly one of the dominating influences in his life. Those who knew Broad much later will remember his anxieties for her in her old age. In 1894 the family removed to Sydenham and then to Forest Hill, an area which had been developed in a rather grand manner out of the ancient forest lands of Norwood. Broad went to a preparatory school as a boarder and then to Dulwich College in 1900. (G. E. Moore, it may be remembered, lived in Upper Norwood and attended Dulwich College under the same Headmaster. But by 1900, Moore was already a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.)

Broad began on the Modern Side at Dulwich, changed to the Engineering Side, and finally was advised to attempt a science scholarship to Trinity College. He went up to Trinity with a Major Scholarship in October 1906. He read for Part I of the Natural Sciences Tripos and was placed in Class I. At

this point he decided to transfer to the Moral Sciences Tripos. He spent two years in preparation and in 1910 was placed in Class I with a mark of distinction. Broad tells us that his interest in philosophy began in his school days with a reading of Schopenhauer and an attempt to read Kant's first *Critique* in translation. A friend persuaded him to balance this diet by reading Mill's *Logic*: and he had the very good luck to be given a copy of Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* not long after it was published. He came to Cambridge as a Kantian Idealist much influenced by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche—or by as much of Zarathustra as he could stomach. He had already, in his teens, abandoned the conventional Christianity in which he had been brought up at home and at school—a transition which took place quite painlessly with the help of the literature of the Rationalist Press Association. Other influences were Shaw, H. G. Wells, and Hardy's *Dynasts*.

At Trinity, Broad became a pupil of McTaggart, and was a regular attendant of the many series of lectures which McTaggart loved to give each year. He was also able to attend the discussion class conducted by W. E. Johnson for three members: Laird, L. J. Russell, and Broad. Moore was not at this time resident: Bertrand Russell returned while Broad was still there. Everyone was reading *Principia Ethica*. It was during these early years that Broad came to mistrust the exciting edifices constructed by Kant and Schopenhauer and to prefer the critical and analytic enquiries for which Cambridge philosophy was already celebrated. The words of J. M. Keynes in the Preface to his *Treatise on Probability* (1920) must have received Broad's wholehearted approval and can very well speak for him also:

It may be perceived that I have been much influenced by W. E. Johnson, G. E. Moore, and Bertrand Russell, that is to say by Cambridge . . .

—and by the 'English tradition' from Locke to Sidgwick, philosophers

who, in spite of their divergences of doctrine, are united in a preference for what is matter of fact, and have conceived their subject as a branch rather of science than of the creative imagination, prose writers, hoping to be understood.

Broad was soon to become one of the leading members of the Cambridge group and also a remarkably clear expositor and critic of conflicting views. His style is sometimes dull and monotonous but at his best he could write brilliantly: with

elegance, economy, and wit. This was not a poetic brilliance: he was from the first a prose writer hoping to be understood.

In 1911 Broad submitted an essay and was awarded a Prize Fellowship by his college: the essay was in fact the basis of his first published book, *Perception, Physics and Reality*. The fellowship would have enabled him to remain in residence, but instead he went to St. Andrews University as Assistant to G. F. Stout. This plan allowed him to invest the emoluments of the fellowship and so to begin an important undertaking which he never gave up: that is, the building up of an investment income which should assure him of complete independence: and which in fact gave him a satisfying occupation. Broad describes investment as one of his sidelines, and two others are also mentioned, the model railway and the 'Nordic interest'. These both date from his schooldays. When he went up to Cambridge the railway was for a time erected in the garden of some friends. But the story, current many years later amongst undergraduates, that there was a model railway somewhere in the rooms on E Staircase, turns out to be untrue. The Nordic interest must have begun with Broad's earliest reading and provided him with his favourite games. It was this interest, latent over very many years, which was revived by Broad's meeting with Georg Henrik von Wright at Trinity in 1938. This led to one of the most important of all Broad's friendships. He learned Swedish and entertained other Swedish students in Cambridge. And in due course Broad paid his first visit to Sweden in 1946—in fact his first visit to any foreign country. After this he visited Sweden every year and was made a member of the Swedish Academy of Sciences and a member of the 'Stockholm Nation' at the university there.

Broad tells us that it was as a child that he first began to take an interest in 'alleged paranormal phenomena': and his painless conversion from orthodox views of the supernatural did not diminish this interest. When first at Cambridge he joined an undergraduate group: and later, at St. Andrews, he received some mild encouragement from Professor Stout. In 1920 Broad joined the Society for Psychical Research which, by origin, was very much a Cambridge affair but at this time got little support there. He became a member of the Council and was twice elected President: in 1935–6 and 1957–60. Broad tells us that he himself had no paranormal experiences and that he did not take part in any of the Society's experiments. But he wrote again and again in comment and criticism of what was being

done and on the cogency of the inferences that were being made. In the early days very few of Broad's philosophical acquaintances took this work seriously—they were inclined to consider it as on the same level as the model railway. Broad took this rather hard: but in later years he found a most valuable and friendly ally in Professor Henry Price—who also in his turn became President of the Society. Broad made a sharp division between those who took an interest in all this and those who could not be bothered with it. Ryle's account of the concept of mind excludes from the start any possibility of mind without body. Professor Antony Flew, on the other hand, was prepared to consider the question at length and to offer carefully reasoned objections. Broad's own conclusions were both tentative and very restricted: he was concerned that philosophers should recognize the problems involved and the possibility that the current orthodoxy of many professional scientists ('in particular experimental psychologists') might turn out to be 'as inadequate as it certainly is arrogant and ill-informed'. He himself had become one of the very few who knew the history of earlier observations and speculations. His account of the activities of Swedenborg and the enquiries of Kant, his sympathetic consideration of the work of the earlier generation of the Society, are important contributions to the history of ideas.

During the First World War Broad was an Assistant at St Andrews University and he undertook scientific work for the Ministry of Munitions—carried out in Irvine's laboratories in the University. He had already begun to publish. After *Perception, Physics and Reality* (1914), he read his first paper to the Aristotelian Society in London on 12 April 1915. This was on Phenomenalism—the first of a long series of valuable contributions to the proceedings of that Society. He was already reviewing books of the first importance; by Couturat, Poincaré, Cantor, McTaggart, Russell, Whitehead, Johnson. To this period belong Broad's first papers on Induction and on the relation of Inductive and Deductive logic. A two-part article was published in *Mind* (1918, 1920); a further paper on Problematic Induction (*Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1927) was followed by a second two-part article in *Mind* (1930) on Demonstrative Induction. Broad's views on this subject were later considered in detail by von Wright in his *Logical Problem of Induction* (1941) and in 'Broad on Induction and Probability', which was his contribution to the Schilpp volume published in 1959. This was included by Professor Hintikka, along with a

selection of Broad's papers, in *Induction, Probability, and Causation* (1968).

In 1920 at the age of 32 Broad became Professor of Philosophy at the University of Bristol. He there completed and published a book which owed much to his discussions with Stout at St. Andrews: *Scientific Thought* (1923). This was an essay in *critical* not speculative philosophy. This distinction is explained in the book. There are two kinds of philosophy, both fundamental and inevitable. The task of Critical Philosophy is to analyse and define the concepts we use in ordinary life and in the sciences, and to formulate the fundamental propositions which in these spheres we take for granted—and to test their truth by whatever logical means we can bring to bear. Speculative Philosophy aims to reach general conclusions about the nature of the universe and about the position and prospects of *persons*. This it may try to do by bringing together the results of the different sciences and of different fields of personal experience and arranging these in a systematic manner. But the classical form of Speculative Philosophy professes to begin with *a priori* self-evident premises or axioms and then to proceed by pure deduction. In effect, at this time, Broad admits the possibility of all these kinds of philosophy and the practicability only of Critical Philosophy. The whole topic is discussed again in Broad's contribution to *Contemporary British Philosophy* (1924). That it appeared as a near-neighbour to Moore's *Defence of Common Sense* is of interest. Broad's view undoubtedly gives a privileged position to many common-sense propositions from which scientific terminology develops—and by means of which it is tested. To many commentators it has seemed that in fact Critical Philosophy introduces its own (often untested) metaphysical premises. All such difficulties were well recognized by Broad but did not undermine his confidence in the value of the testing; nor lead him to claim (as Moore claimed) that there is a very wide range of propositions which—without testing—we *know*. One might say that the findings of most Speculative Philosophers *shocked* Moore. Broad was later to spend much of his time in examining these systems and came to regard them as great intellectual achievements. Yet he rejects every one. Broad remarked 'Moore's philosophical interests were wholly analytic and critical'. The philosophy that Broad practised is almost wholly analytic and critical, but it came to be concerned with metaphysical systems and concepts as well as with the sciences and ordinary discourse.

In *Scientific Thought*, Broad undertakes the examination of the traditional concepts of mathematical physics: space, time, change; and examines the use made by Whitehead of his doctrine of *extensive abstraction*. He gives an account of the gradual modification of traditional kinetics and discusses the Special Theory of Relativity and the General Theory. From this discussion Broad then turns to consider just what must be the nature of our immediate experience in perception and in exactly what way these experiences allow or require us to form the concepts of the physical world and the special concepts of the physical sciences. This account introduces *sensa*, or 'sense-data' as Russell and Moore had named those particulars which are the immediate objects of sense-awareness if we suppose that physical objects cannot themselves be such immediate objects. Broad's discussion deals in an elaborate and painstaking way with questions about the positions, sizes, shapes, durations of *sensa* and tackles many puzzling questions about the relation of sensible positions in space and time to positions in public space and time. The topic had been raised by Russell in his paper on 'The Relation of Sense-data to Physics' (1914) and by Moore in a symposium with Stout on 'The Status of Sense-data' in the same year. These all raised questions which only Mill of the earlier empiricists seems to have been aware of; and many puzzles which had previously been dealt with only by a gesture or prudently ignored altogether. Broad's analyses were to be carried a stage further by Professor Henry Price in his memorable account of *Hume's Theory of the External World* (1940). The value of Broad's work rests in particular on his ability to relate the traditional philosophical problem of perception to the highly technical problem of the relation of what we perceive to what we are led to assert in the physical sciences.

In *Scientific Thought* the main theme is our knowledge of the physical world. Our knowledge of mind and its relation to body was chosen by Broad as the topic of the Turner Lectures which he gave in Cambridge in 1923. The first of these series had been given by A. N. Whitehead in 1919 and had been published under the title of 'The Concept of Nature'. The requirement of the Foundation is to deliver a course of lectures on the relation or lack of relation between the various sciences. Whitehead explicitly confined himself to the study of Nature as an object of Mind—to what he called 'homogeneous thoughts about nature'. He had not concerned himself with the status of sense-

awareness but with the widest possible general truths that can be asserted about 'nature', on Whitehead's view, 'the terminus of sense-perception'. Broad chose to enter the very field that Whitehead had left to others: the minds that perceive the physical world and have feelings about it. This inevitably involves a consideration of bodies as distinct from the general concept of matter. The lectures given in Trinity College in 1923 were published in 1925 as *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, one of Broad's most widely influential and controversial works. Controversial for many reasons but perhaps above all on account of the section on The Unconscious and the section on Alleged Evidence for Human Survival of Bodily Death. In his Preface Broad expressed the hope that the book might provide some starting-points for fruitful controversies among philosophers, psychologists, biologists, and psychical researchers. Perhaps the truth is that it has most noticeably promoted controversies amongst philosophers: it compelled their attention for almost a decade. The book offered a clear and (within the limitations of the time) comprehensive account of the different views held by philosophers, scientists, and by commonsense affirmations about the world. Some of the views discussed are familiar and classical—as Descartes' dualism or Spinoza's 'double-aspect' theory. Some are empirically based and some are not; some emerge only from Broad's determination to consider every possible combination of the variables in the discussion.

As an introduction to the various mind-body problems, the book has proved invaluable to more than a generation of students: Broad himself used to prescribe it to absolute beginners. But of course it attempted many more ambitious tasks. The earlier chapters comprise a critical examination of the concepts of sense-perception, memory, introspection, the unconscious, our knowledge of other minds—whether inferential or telepathic or instinctive. The treatment is explicative and analytic. The section 'Alleged Evidence for Human Survival' does indeed include a critical examination of abnormal phenomena, some of which Broad regards as resting on at least respectable *prima facie* evidence, and some as 'fairly well attested'. The 'Ethical Arguments for Survival' deals with Speculative Philosophy—the views of Kant and of Broad's former colleague, A. E. Taylor. But the treatment is still critical: Broad does not yet offer any alternative to these systems. However, in 'The Status and Prospects of Mind in Nature',

Broad comes rather nearer to offering a speculative conclusion. His examination of all the possible combinations has yielded seventeen different views and he proceeds to an adjudication. Many of the 'possible' solutions are easily shown to be absurd and the only puzzling thing about them is why they had to be considered. But the choice in the later stages is still embarrassingly wide. Are we to incline to a reductivist theory—a mechanistic, simple materialist view of mind? Or are we to fly in the opposite direction and take mind or minds to be the ultimate reality, and body to be one of the constructs of mind? Broad clearly thinks along the first lines; the mind might stand in one-sided dependence upon the body. This he thinks covers the normal phenomena: it does not *reduce* mental states to bodily states: mentality is an emergent characteristic of certain systems of matter. But Broad thinks that we are not on any grounds absolutely driven to this (or any other) conclusion on this question. And he suggests that the *abnormal* phenomena could be accommodated by the view that the mind is a compound substance whose constituents are the organism and a 'psychic factor'. That the psychic factor may persist for a time after the death of the body is then a possibility for which (as some hold) there is evidence. But the 'Compound Theory' aims to leave this possibility open. Even if one rejected all the evidence so far collected, there is always the chance that new evidence may be found which would oblige us to revise any monistic theory. That this view will itself be rejected out of hand by many, does not alarm Broad: he seems to suppose that the rejection rests on a confusion between an emergent theory and one which makes mind a differentiating attribute.

Fifty years after, the whole picture looks very different. The terminology which Broad and his contemporaries used with such freedom and confidence no longer seems to bear any close relation with our ordinary talk about ourselves. The concepts of mind and body which Broad takes for granted in his title are already technical terms departing dangerously from our ordinary speech: they are in fact philosophical terms worn into shape in the long exchanges of philosophical debate. It is in these terms that Broad reaches his conclusions—cautious, precarious, speculative—about mind and its prospects. In *The Concept of Mind*, published in 1949, Gilbert Ryle attempted to show that the very notion of mind as a thing that could be in or out of relation to another thing, the body, was nonsensical—was due to a confusion of categories. This book compelled the

attention of philosophers for about another decade—not, of course, always with assent. It seemed to give a new and closer look at the problems for which the traditional philosophical terminology had been devised. But many of the particular puzzles which Broad discussed in his book retain all their interest: it would be hard indeed to match his grasp of the philosophical terms and the scientific terms. These invaluable elucidations were continued in the second volume of his commentary on McTaggart. No philosopher since Broad (of comparable standing) has undertaken a synoptic view of the whole situation. Ryle did not undertake any such task. This, Broad found it hard to believe: ‘If Ryle is *not* “speculating about the mind”, what does he think he is doing?’

In 1923 Broad gave up his chair at Bristol and returned to Trinity as a Fellow, in which most fortunate position he remained for the rest of his long life. He succeeded his own teacher McTaggart as Lecturer in Moral Sciences—which must have been a matter of pride; and he was very proud to be living in the set of rooms in Great Court which had once been the home of Sir Isaac Newton—and in which he succeeded his friend E. D. Adrian. As a lecturer he gave three courses: *Outlines of Philosophy* was intended for Part I students. At the beginning of each year the lectures were attended also by undergraduates reading Classics, English, Theology, and other subjects. Faced with this crowd, Broad would have to leave his favourite small lecture room (which, after McTaggart’s death in 1925, had his portrait on the wall) and transfer to larger quarters. But in doing so he would regularly announce that he intended to move back again shortly when the attendance had fallen. And this is what usually happened. The other series were for those reading for Part IIA: lectures on Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Kant—and in theory, to Hegel: and lectures on one or two specially selected authors studied in greater depth. His lectures on Leibniz have been published very recently: they were originally supplemented by lectures on Lotze. This had been done some years before when McTaggart was lecturing and Broad, a member of the class, had found Lotze ‘rather a bore’; but that did not prevent him from doing likewise in the early thirties. He followed this up in the next year by making McTaggart the special author and delivering some of the material which was to be published later as *The Examination of McTaggart’s Philosophy*. Broad remarks that his lectures were always written out in full before delivery, and

that this made it easy for him to turn his lectures into books. Those who attended them may be inclined to say that it was a matter of turning books into lectures rather than lectures into books. What Broad did was to read his text aloud to the undergraduates who attended; and to read sentence by sentence, each one twice over. Those who wished to do so could in this way obtain a verbatim version in longhand. There was a member who was away ill for some weeks and Broad very kindly sent his manuscript by post so that the copying should not be in arrears. And there was an occasion when that same student found he was the one and only member of the class: what would happen now? There was no change in the procedure except that Broad waited to see me look up before he went on to the next sentence: and I am glad to remember that I managed a little acceleration. Why he actually dictated is not easy to understand. It was clear enough that he mistrusted his own ability to speak at length without a script, although he could interject very effectively the vital or the deadly remark and very often the witty and memorable remark. But Broad's reading aloud was not (as Professor Price's is) an event which compelled attention and admiration. However, the lectures were no doubt more orderly, precise, and *usable* than any extempore conversational lectures could be.

In supervisions everything was different. He had a precise but easy conversational manner which his pupils will not forget. He always saw his pupils singly and would usually have the essay read aloud in the traditional manner. His comments were carefully thought out and (for the slower ones) expressed and re-expressed with great patience. He had the habit of asking very difficult (and often very devastating) questions and if no answer were forthcoming, waiting each time for exactly the same rather long silent interval before taking up his own point. In the 1930s there was a problem for those who were also listening each week to Wittgenstein's lectures: should any of these new thoughts be allowed to intrude into one's essays for Broad? In fact he was patient enough to listen and had no difficulty in dealing with the confused and hesitant versions which he was at that time offered.

The clash between Broad and Wittgenstein was important to everyone. Cambridge philosophy was at that time based on a very small number of teachers, a few visiting scholars from time to time (Charles Stevenson, William Frankena, and others), a few graduate students. In 1932 there were some eight

candidates for Part II of the Tripos. In such a small group personal relations were apt to be strong and could be overwhelming. When Wittgenstein attended the Moral Science Club regularly, Ewing persisted in coming and was met with crushing rebuffs or equally crushing silences. His lion-like courage compelled admiration, and there came a time when Wittgenstein would himself put Ewing's characteristic objections in order that his disciples should not altogether forget what other opinions tasted like. Broad gave up attending these meetings except when there was a visiting speaker whom he knew. Broad's hostility was expressed as early as 1925 in the Preface to *Mind and its Place in Nature*: he sees his younger colleagues dancing to Wittgenstein's flute. In the Autobiography he says bluntly that the cigarette smoke and the spectacle of Wittgenstein going punctually through his hoops was more than he could stand. However, in later years he had to take Wittgenstein very seriously. Broad reviewed von Wright's *Biographical Sketch* of Wittgenstein in 1959 and came to the conclusion that Wittgenstein *must be* a man of great distinction, since von Wright and Moore agree that he is. And writing after Wittgenstein's death, Broad actually places him along with Moore and Russell as philosophers of quite outstanding ability, originality, and personality. And it seems that when Wittgenstein left Cambridge for Ireland, he handed a copy of the *Philosophische Untersuchungen* to Broad for his safe-keeping; and that he consulted Broad on the question whether it would be satisfactory to publish only in German. (Broad seems to have thought that it was not at all necessary to publish an English translation since those who would wish to study it would be sure to know German well enough.)

In 1933 the Knightbridge Chair of Moral Philosophy fell vacant and Broad applied and was elected. In some ways he regretted the change: he had now to supervise candidates for the Ph.D. degree and could no longer take pupils reading for the Tripos. But no doubt he regarded it as an honour to occupy the Chair held by Whewell, John Grote, and Henry Sidgwick. As a professor, he acknowledged a duty 'to proceed with the least possible delay to find out the difference between Right and Wrong and to impart the information to undergraduates in a course of three lectures a week'. In fact he had already made an important beginning. His book *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, published in 1930, arose out of his discussions with undergraduate pupils reading for Part I. It was a favourite remark of

his that ethics was a very suitable subject for Part I. The book has been very widely read and is the most readily understandable and enjoyable of them all. Broad's approach to ethics in this book was by an historical and critical study of great philosophers of the past—in this case, Spinoza, Kant, Butler, English Utilitarians. This was something of a new departure. His earlier works had shown his very high standard of scholarship—in the history of science especially. But he had tackled the problems of the philosophy of science and the philosophy of mind *directly* and not historically. The works of his middle period show that he now found it natural to approach philosophical problems in an historical manner. The works of the period also indicate a wider concern for the traditional problems of metaphysics—with an undiminished interest in problems about mind. There are the lectures on Leibniz, and lectures on Kant, published posthumously by Dr. Lewy; and in the next decade Broad wrote on Leibniz's last controversy with the Newtonians, on 'The New Philosophy, Bruno to Descartes', on Butler's controversy with the Deists, on Newton and on Bacon, and on the various moralists in *Five Types*. This interest in the history of philosophy in no way diminished his direct concern with problems: many of his best-known ethical studies of an analytical character belong to the same period. And it was in the thirties that Broad wrote his longest and perhaps his most important work, the *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy*.

The Nature of Existence was published in two volumes: the first by McTaggart himself (with some acknowledgements to Moore, Whitehead, and Broad) in 1921. The second was edited by Broad from typescripts and manuscripts which McTaggart had entrusted to him by his will. This was itself a very considerable piece of work: there are 480 pages in Volume II and Broad compiled an analytical Table of Contents covering forty pages. So that he had invested a great deal in McTaggart by the time the second volume was published in 1927. And during the following four or five years he wrote a very full and clear account of the doctrines of *The Nature of Existence*, adding lengthy comments of his own. Volume I was published in 1933. The second volume came out in 1938 in two Parts and 796 pages—rather longer than the two volumes of the work examined. Broad here tackles fundamental metaphysical questions and is found discussing speculative philosophy in spite of his earlier view that philosophy could not proceed with any success beyond a 'critical' examination of the most puzzling problems.

The situation is somewhat complicated. Broad's own conclusions seem to vindicate the opinion that the deductive systems of speculative philosophy are all failures. His own comments on Leibniz, Kant, and McTaggart are critical. When he suggests alternative speculative advances, as he often does, these are simply alternatives open *ad hominem*—to McTaggart for instance. None is in fact accepted by Broad. Why then did he allow his own examination of metaphysics to take shape from *The Nature of Existence*?

One reason certainly is Broad's great admiration for McTaggart—'an extraordinarily original and sensitive personality endowed with a singularly acute and powerful intellect'. This impression came partly from Broad's experience of him as a teacher. Moore also seems to have been deeply impressed by McTaggart's personality and writings. From the beginnings he lent his help by giving detailed comments on drafts intended for the *Examination*: and many years later a visiting friend from Oxford found Moore, now in his old age, sitting in his garden and pondering a paper of McTaggart's which had puzzled him long ago. Broad was not alone in holding that McTaggart was of the stature of the great philosophers.

Somewhat curiously, it seemed to Broad to be an advantage that McTaggart was ignorant of recent scientific views about the universe and altogether indifferent to them. It seemed to Broad that the many successes of the sciences in their proper fields had encouraged some scientists (and still more, the public) to think that it was for scientists to dispose of philosophical problems. This was 'of course a profound mistake'. The philosophical problems connected with universals and particulars, occurrents and continuants, causation, and indeterminacy, all remained exactly where they were and had merely found new applications as scientific theories came and went. McTaggart was not tempted to adapt his views to the scientific fashion of the moment.

Broad also remarks that the grand thesis of the unity of the universe badly needed to be restated in clear and intelligible terms. 'The fall of a sandcastle on the English coast changes the nature of the Great Pyramid.' Does it indeed? Its *nature*? At all events McTaggart presented the thesis in readable as well as subtle terms.

A further reason is that Broad was himself directly interested in this and in many of the other perennial problems of speculative metaphysics: the immortality of the soul is the most

striking example. Others had constructed systems in which such puzzles were (or rather, seemed to be) resolved. Broad had no system of his own: he could enter this field only as a critic of other men's systems. And for the great systems Broad had the most profound respect: he thought of them as 'amongst the greatest intellectual achievements of the human mind'. Yet they were all terribly imperfect. A critical examination might reveal obscurities and confusions which had already permeated opinion far beyond the limits of any one system. Broad thought this examination was worth doing.

In Broad's opinion the central thesis of McTaggart's philosophy is that Time is unreal. (That Time is *real*, might well be regarded as the central thesis of Moore's *Defence of Common Sense*.) On McTaggart's view Broad offers a final conclusion:

McTaggart's main argument against the reality of Time is a philosophical 'howler' . . . The fallacy in McTaggart's argument consists in treating absolute becoming as if it were a species of qualitative change and in trying to replace temporal copulas by non-temporal copulas and adjectives.

In his view we all very soon see that the argument *must* be wrong. It takes a very great deal of hard work and patience to discover precisely *what* is wrong. Broad shows in detail that what McTaggart called 'the A-Series' of past, present, and future must be taken as fundamental; that any attempt to reduce it to the 'B-Series' of earlier, simultaneous, and later, leads to one or other entirely unacceptable consequence. Either the obvious fact that events *happen* is entirely overlooked or we are lost in an infinite regress of temporal dimensions.

In the second volume of the *Examination* it is noticeable that Broad tends to pose his questions in technical terminology taken from Russell. In Broad's early days the Theory of Descriptions—Proper Names, Definite Descriptions and their analysis, logical constructions, and so on—must have seemed to carry the full weight of formal logic: and Broad seems not to have reconsidered these Russellian doctrines in later life. This he might perhaps have been led to do if he had begun his own metaphysical enquiries from an absolute starting point without reference to McTaggart. There is something of a parallel between Broad's *Examination* and J. S. Mill's *Examination*. Each is in fact the author's major work on metaphysics and each is based on the work of another philosopher of an opposed school. And perhaps for that very reason, each accepts presuppositions of his own school—Mill making much use of Benthamite notions. This is

not to complain of what they accomplished. And Broad was no doubt correct in saying that this book 'contains about the best work of which I am capable in philosophy'. It is certainly one of the classics of its own time and school. In his preface to the second volume Broad gives his own conclusion in the words: *Sat patriae Priamoque datum*.

In his Autobiography Broad says that beyond this point he took little interest in the further development of philosophy and even ceased to believe in its importance—that he had, in fact, 'shot his bolt' almost at the very time when he became Professor. And in a later review he says that, while for Wittgenstein philosophy was a way of life, for him (for Broad) it was 'primarily a means of livelihood'. These remarks can hardly be taken at their face value and the second of them was hardly meant to be. They might indeed be paraphrased by saying that Broad heartily mistrusted the direction that philosophy seemed to be taking under the influence of Wittgenstein; that for Broad philosophy should be professional rather than prophetic—but no less a ruling passion. And perhaps there is also some regret that his long reflection on ethical questions had not enabled him to write a major work on the subject.

In fact Broad continued to tackle problems in ethics in the way that had long been characteristic of him. He wrote one paper after another, dealing with topics that perplexed him, or with other philosophers' solutions which troubled him no less. Some of these papers were republished in *Ethics and the History of Philosophy* (1952). Many more were included in a collection covering fifty years from 1914 to 1964, *Critical Essays in Moral Philosophy* (1971). Here are some sixteen papers, each of them directly dealing with a single problem: and to these must of course be added the papers which examine the views of other philosophers, as in *Five Types*.

His method is analytical: What exactly is meant by Determinism, Indeterminism, and Libertarianism? This is the title of his Inaugural Lecture and the problem connects with his earlier work on Causality and on Mind. But Moore's influence is very evident and very often acknowledged. Is *goodness* a simple, non-natural property? And this gives rise (both for Moore and for Broad) to the question whether 'goodness' is the name of any kind of property. Both considered very seriously the view particularly associated with Charles Stevenson, that the indicative form of moral language is fundamentally misleading: the meaning of the terms can be understood only by

considering their emotive force and direction. Neither Moore nor Broad in the end accepted such an account. A further interest of Broad's is Egoism. 'Egoism as a Theory of Motives'—or psychological egoism—he regards as certainly false, not even an approximation to the truth. But ethical egoism is taken very seriously: very much more seriously than by Moore in *Principia Ethica*. Returning to Sidgwick and to Butler and Kant, Broad takes account of ethical egoism along with altruism and 'neutralism'—the view that morality should make no distinction between the agent as such and any other person. He finds that no one of these views exactly fits commonsense notions of morality, and rejects the arguments offered for any one of these views exclusively. Of the three, Egoism in any of its more rigorous forms is by far the least plausible.

Broad's ethical writings exhibit his caution, his willingness to suspend judgment, and the plain good sense of most of the conclusions he succeeds in reaching. The influence of these writings has been considerable. Professor Frankena has said that almost every worthwhile contribution to ethical theory written since 1930 has been 'significantly affected' by them. It is the method that has impressed: 'the method of detail' which Mill correctly imputed to Bentham; and the fairmindedness he shows within the limits of his vision. Not for nothing was Joseph Butler one of his favourite authors.

At various times in his life Broad wrote on theological topics and 'Butler as a Theologian' (1923) was a tribute to Bristol as well as to Butler. It is a sympathetic examination of the argument of the *Analogy*. Broad reaches the conclusion that the results of Butler's arguments could be stated in terms of 'Nature' rather than of 'God'. In 'The Validity of Belief in a Personal God' Broad again argues that such a belief is not necessary if we allow ourselves to take a wide view of the possible powers of nature. This lecture was given to a meeting of the Student Christian Movement in Cambridge not long after Broad's return there in 1923. A fuller examination of the arguments was published in the *Journal of Theological Studies* in 1939. Broad comes to the conclusion that the Ontological Argument is a disguised syllogism in Fourth Figure, AEE, with a fatal equivocation over the import of the conclusion. Since, as Kant has shown, the Ontological Argument is required for the other Arguments, Broad finds that nothing at all is left of the *a priori* 'proofs'. But in examining arguments based on observation—chiefly in 'religious experience', Broad leaves a door ajar.

Beliefs based on such experiences may be 'a continual approximation to true knowledge'—may in fact be additions to scientific beliefs. That these experiences so often come to very strange people must not discredit them: 'One might have to be slightly "cracked" in order to have some peep-hole into the super-sensible world.' J. S. Mill invited his readers to look at religion 'not from the point of view of reverence, but from that of science'. This is usually Broad's approach. He had no kind of religious experiences himself: he had no prejudice against those who had. He had no religious hopes: his interest in 'survival' was theoretical. He was not brave enough to face another sort of existence and even the prospect of meeting again one's friends and relations (if that should ever happen in an after-life) seemed to him likely to be very embarrassing. But in any case, hopes and fears had no bearing on the truth or falsehood of any religious beliefs. This, at all events, is his *usual* view on the matter. But there are hints that he recognized the practical importance of these beliefs and the way in which this depends in part upon their imaginative power. He remarks that the discovery that the Earth is not the centre of the universe *upset* Christian dogma without actually contradicting it. The Christian story looked too *small* when seen in a Copernican universe. The comment, whether sound or not, is a hint of a quite different view of religion.

Broad's tenure of the Knightbridge Chair included the war years. As he had undertaken war work in 1914, so he now looked for some form of service. He volunteered to take over the work of the Junior Bursar who had departed into the army. The work was important and burdensome and involved the direction of most of the internal arrangements of the College. Broad found how very deeply and passionately some of his colleagues could feel about matters affecting them, however trivial they might seem to others. He was surprised and pleased to find that he himself could deal with all these practical matters—the kind of work he had in the past done his very successful best to avoid. When the war ended Broad took sabbatical leave and his first foreign travel. Moore had retired and had been succeeded by Wittgenstein in 1939. But Wittgenstein resigned from the end of 1947 and was succeeded by von Wright. So that for a short time the two friends occupied the two Chairs of Philosophy at Cambridge. In 1951 von Wright returned to his own country to the Chair at Helsinki: and two years later Broad reached the age of 65 and relinquished the

Chair. He remained a Fellow of Trinity and retained his rooms in Great Court and his other privileges. His first move was to pay a visit to the United States—to Ann Arbor and to the University of California in Los Angeles. Broad had often made derisive remarks about America and American universities: he changed his mind during the visit. 'It was a great pleasure to me' he wrote (three days after his return) 'to be in a country which still believes in itself and its way of life; and has very good reason to do so, since it abundantly "delivers the goods".' He was enthusiastic about the universities he visited and the reception they gave him; enthusiastic also about the scientific aids to higher civilization which he had so much admired in Sweden: refrigerators, electric wall-heaters, double glazing. After his return he embellished the rooms on E Staircase with gadgets Newton never knew.

During the long years of his retirement Broad naturally continued to write. He maintained his interest in Psychical Research. This was in fact stimulated by his contacts with the American Society and with the 'para-psychology' which was being pursued in some universities. In 1959 and 1960 he delivered the Perrott Lectures on this subject and published them along with related papers. The book has a section on experimental work and the highly sophisticated methods of testing; a section on the performances of various mediums. But most readers will find they prefer Broad's accounts of the 'sporadic' phenomena: hallucinations, dreams, out-of-the-body experiences, phantasms of the living and the dead. Here he shows his gift for narrative as well as his relentless assessment of the 'cash-value' of the story as evidence.

In the 1950s preparations began for the volume of Broad's philosophy edited by Professor Schilpp. This placed Broad alongside Whitehead, Russell, and Moore. The contributors included many of Broad's former pupils, with Price and Kneale from Oxford and many American and Scandinavian philosophers. A magnificent Bibliography (up to the date of publication, 1959) was contributed by Dr. Casimir Lewy. The twenty critics are carefully dealt with in Broad's lengthy 'Reply' which is a lively (at times) and illuminating account of his views. An interesting aside is to be found in his answer to Frankena's enquiry: Has Broad a decided opinion on four inter-related ethical questions? The answer is 'No. I have no decided opinion on any of these points. But I could say the same about almost any philosophical question.' At the conclusion of the 'Reply' he

says that his views are no doubt antiquated without having yet acquired the interest of a collector's piece. He was now almost seventy. If anything dates about his writing (as of course it does) it is not his style. He was still dealing exhaustively with each topic, listing every possible alternative and carefully considering which could be eliminated. And he was still doing this very clearly. And here—as always—he enlivens the discussion by his unexpected and often irreverent mode of describing situations, opinions, and people. He especially liked to find the epithet that summed up a matter in a way that would not be forgotten—sometimes generously and often not. J. S. Mill was 'that amiable prig' but Spinoza was 'a prophet without being a prig, a saint without being a sponger'. Of his two most admired colleagues he was fond of saying: *Si Russell savait, si Moore pouvait*, which seems a little hard on them both. He would often allow his prejudices to embellish his conclusions, as when he says that psychological hedonism is a dead theory: 'Still, all good fallacies go to America when they die and rise again as the discoveries of the local professors.' He would also attempt the more elaborate epigram—as this on a Prime Minister's Honours List: *Neminem ornavit quem non tetigit*. This exactly fits McTaggart's recipe for a Cambridge Union Society epigram: Take a cliché and convert it. So also does a favourite phrase of Broad's—'to praise with faint damns'. At his very best he can be compared with Hume:

If we compare McTaggart with the other commentators on Hegel we must admit that he has at least produced an extremely lively and fascinating rabbit from the Hegelian hat, whilst they have produced nothing but consumptive and gibbering chimeras. And we shall admire his resource and dexterity all the more when we reflect that the rabbit was, in all probability, never inside the hat, whilst the chimeras perhaps were.

This is taken from *Ethics and the History of Philosophy*, a small group of papers which Broad described as 'Selected Essays'. In these his powers as a writer are best seen. They are historical and biographical and show that Broad had distinct gifts as a narrator and an interpreter of events and characters. The essay on McTaggart is placed along with others dealing with a group of Cambridge philosophers: Bacon, Newton, Sidgwick, W. E. Johnson. To these he added John Locke, as one of Nature's Trinity men. Broad's affection for Johnson is admirably conveyed, and his understanding of 'the Nonconformist Mind' in the Johnson family. By contrast, McTaggart 'though an

atheist could never have been anything but an Anglican'. With Sidgwick, who of course was not known to Broad personally, he shared some strong ethical convictions and a host of ethical problems. With both the Sidgwicks, he shared an interest in psychical research and very greatly admired the work done by Mrs. Sidgwick whom he knew over a long period. Of the work they accomplished for the education of women in Cambridge, Broad's view was that persons of virtue and intelligence were likely to differ in their judgment 'till the end of time'. This was in 1930: it seems to show that on this point the crystal ball was clouded.

These essays and a number of others show Broad to have been a scrupulous first-hand investigator of documents. They also give a sense of the past, of the movement of events on a large scale and on a small scale; the changes of opinion, the precariousness of all human achievements. Broad once remarked that it is very rare indeed for a new and important idea to occur in philosophy, that not more than two or three philosophers in a generation could achieve a decisive step forward. This he said to signify that he himself was not one of those very few.

One of Broad's most ambitious essays in biography is his account of his own life—the 66-page Autobiography which forms the preface to 'The Philosophy of C. D. Broad'. This was a very much longer, more personal and more critical document than any that had been offered before in the series—the 'Moribund Philosophers' as Broad liked to call them. He gives a full history of his family on both sides and an elaborate account of their characters, accomplishments, illnesses, financial circumstances, and of their cats. Like many unmarried people he was tremendously occupied with his forebears and relatives although only in a few cases did those mentioned by Broad have any apparent influence on his own career. This was rather a matter of identity, of being rather than of doing. It is clear that Broad was very much taken up with himself: his writing of this Autobiography shows how fascinating a subject he found himself to be. And in its strange way it is a fascinating document. It is written with Broad's verve, asperity, and wit and occasional generosity. This generosity he does not extend to himself. He makes it a matter of record that he lacked courage, both physical and moral, that he lacked self-confidence and drive. He has little to say in favour of his own character: he is not at all the kind of person that he *likes*. And after these remarks he adds that this possible bias has not led him (he thinks) to be

in any way unfair to himself in his autobiography. In his conclusion he permits himself one complimentary remark: he has been able to please many of 'the kind of young men I like and admire'.

Many readers will regard the Autobiography as in certain ways unfair to Broad. He was an unsociable but not an unfriendly man. He had grown up a solitary boy in a formidable group of intelligent and active elderly persons. In the 1920s almost all these had gone their way. 'Immune to the mantrap of matrimony', Broad had the difficult task of building up a new 'family' for himself in Cambridge. He succeeded after a fashion but he did not find it easy. He was what is called 'reserved': and he goes out of his way to tell us that the habit of reserve was the most valuable lesson he learnt from his Aunt Harriet and Uncle Edwin. He was very willing to be alone: his recreations were indoor and bookish except for his regular long country walks at high speed, alone or with one companion. Broad seems never to have cared to practise philosophy in a free-for-all discussion group: he was therefore absent from much of the philosophical activity and agony of Cambridge. But of course he had plenty of discussion with his colleagues and his pupils. He enjoyed the secluded society of High Table and the Combination Room. He could be an excellent and amusing host.

It is true enough that Broad cultivated the friendship of a succession of young men of amiable manners, good breeding, and good looks and—of course—intelligence. They tended also to be confident, forthright, and proficient at outdoor games. Some of these were to become highly distinguished in later life. It seems that these unequal friendships came about because Broad needed them and did indeed know how to please (and to tease) those who pleased him. Broad's words call to mind the close of a five-o'clock supervision in the May Term: the unexpected entry of a dazzling young Scandinavian and Broad's warm welcome: 'And have you brought the horoscope?' However, such friendships could be extended beyond the period which Broad called 'the Charm of Youth': beyond the dangerous period when (as he would bluntly say) the charm had vanished and the assurance and poise of maturity had not yet been achieved. And in some cases, if there were opportunity, the friendship could be widened to include the young man's family—mother, sister, and in due course, wife. It is also true (Broad does not mention it) that there were former pupils of

his who were not-so-young men, of no charm at all, unlucky in looks as in life, who found in Broad a sympathetic audience, advocate, and friend. In some cases this looked very like simple compassion and suggests a more generous character than Broad admits to having.

Broad must almost have seemed to others to be a permanent resident of Trinity Great Court. But it was after all 'such permanence as Time has'. He died at the age of 83 on 11 March 1971.

Broad must be remembered as one of a very exceptional group of thinkers at Cambridge. His outstanding intellectual abilities, the width of his interests, his rigorous standards, and his capacity for work won for him the highest respect of Russell, Moore, Keynes, Adrian. The great world in which some of these played such a notable part meant nothing to Broad: he had no ambitions there and was almost unknown there. But for intellectual achievements of any kind—from works of genius to odd insights—he had a sincere and disinterested admiration. When Keynes died in 1946 he bequeathed to Broad a set of formidable and rare volumes of Leibniz's mathematical writings—a most discriminating bequest which Broad received with great pleasure and pride.

KARL BRITTON

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