



OXFORD JOURNALS
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Mind Association

McTaggart's Nature of Existence, Vol. I. Comments and Amendments

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Source: *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 47, No. 188 (Oct., 1938), pp. 547-550

Published by: [Oxford University Press](#) on behalf of the [Mind Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2250390>

Accessed: 20/12/2014 15:20

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VIII.—NOTES.

McTAGGART'S *NATURE OF EXISTENCE*, VOL. I. COMMENTS AND AMENDMENTS.

AFTER the publication of the first volume of the *Nature of Existence* in 1921 and until his death in 1925, McTaggart continued working on the detail of his arguments, and from time to time would record miscellaneous memoranda in the margins of his own copy of the book. This personal copy of McTaggart's came into my possession with the part of his library which Mrs. McTaggart left to me at her death. Having profited on several occasions from these marginal comments, it seemed that by transcribing and making them public, I should be of service to others who believe McTaggart's work to merit the closest attention.

The additions are in the nature of re-statements designed to remove ambiguity, corrections of errors, possible improvements tentatively made, and a few suggestions from colleagues at Cambridge. Some thirty of the entries are *corrigenda* of which use should be made when the printing of a second edition is contemplated. (These thirty include five of the seven items recorded by Dr. Broad as 'Misprints' on p. lvi of his *Examination*, Vol. I. Although McTaggart's copy confirms neither the first nor the sixth entry in Dr. Broad's list, there can be no doubt that both are 'Misprints'.) I have not reproduced the few suggestions from colleagues since the record conveys no suggestion that McTaggart had decided to accept them.

McTaggart's handwriting is far from easy to read, and some entries, particularly those made in pencil and now partly obscured, have been difficult to decipher. I have not spared time or pains to secure that they are accurately transcribed, and where there seemed doubt of the meaning, I tried to confirm my understanding of it independently of the note, by inference from the relevant part of McTaggart's doctrine. All that I have added to the notes by way of amplification is enclosed in *square* brackets.

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- xix Table of Contents; Sect. 257:—*Delete* "there seems no ground for" and "or unity of manifestation", so that the sentence will read: "As to the *natures* of substances, unity of composition is the more appropriate expression."
- 3 Lines 2-3, *insert* before "all that exists", "(1)"; and before "Existence as a whole", "(2)".
- Marginal note: "Make clear that these are different. Ward missed this."

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- 6 Marginal note to lines 8-10: "Is this too strong?"
- 11 Note to first par. of § 10:—"What is a Fact? Is it a relation? Rather a *relationship*."
- 16 Note to first par. of § 16:—"Aquinas says that if nothing existed, there would be no truth, but there would be 'matter of truth'. *Le Thomisme*, by E. Gilson, p. 41-2."
- 19 Line 2, for "fact", read "event".
- 20 Note to last par. of § 19:—"It is a *belief*, which has the relation of non-correspondence to all facts, which is false. A table which did not correspond to any fact would not be false. Also, it is the relation, not of non-correspondence, but of non-truth, which is a special sort of correspondence."
- 21 Line 7, for "fact", read "event".
- 24 Line 3 of § 26:—After "implies", insert "or does not imply". Marginal note: "The latter is the case with propositions containing 'may'". Line 9 of § 26:—After "assertion", insert "But 'red is a quality' or 'red is visual' does not strictly assert a concomitance of characteristics, but asserts one characteristic of another."
- 31 Note to third par. of § 33:—"But we could say '(a characteristic whose possession involves d[?]ation) is not possessed by St. Michael'. And the description within brackets does not apply to anything, any more than 'present High Treasurer of England' does."
- 42 Last word of footnote:—for "facts", read "events".
- 51 Lines 4-5 of footnote:—for "such a statement . . . it asserts", read "such statements, though they have a certain uniform relation to truth, are themselves false, since they assert . . ."
- 61 8 lines from bottom:—for "say to define", read "try to define . . ."
- 64 Line 6 of § 64:—for "V, W, and Z", read "V, W and Y".
- 65 Note on the phrases "all the qualities" and "the Nature of" in the last par. before footnote:—"Broad objects (MIND, p. 320) that in this case Nature would include itself as a part. Let us say therefore 'all the *simple* qualities'. (But that would not do because you do not get *complex* q[ualities] by merely adding the simple. One might say, 'all non-compound qualities'.)" [The reference to "Broad" is to C. D. Broad's critical notice of the *Nature of Existence*, vol. i, in MIND, vol. xxx, 1921; p. 320.]
- 73 Line 18, note on "all red-haired archdeacons":—"I meant the Group, not the Class. cp. Stout's Herz Lecture." [Full reference: G. F. Stout, *The Nature of Universals and Propositions* (p. 7), Annual Philosophical Lecture, Henriette Herz Trust, 1921:—*Proc. British Acad.*, vol. x; also published separately.]
- 77 Lines 15-16, note on "It is self-evident . . . has perceptions":—"Should one rather say that it is a very certain inference from two self-evident perceptions of perception?"
- 89 Lines 20 and 23, in both, for "relations", read "relationships".
- 98 Lines 7-8, for "knowledge of A which . . . knowledge of A's qualities", read "knowledge of A the unambiguity of which is not dependent on the unambiguity of my knowledge of A's qualities, . . ."
- Line 21, insert a comma after "quality", and insert "individuality" between "which" and "would".

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- 98 Note following the footnote:—"What is now said in Chap. 37 leads to the conclusion that I always perceive a perception as having an *exclusive* description; the only thing having this q[uality] known to me at this [?] time."
- 101 Line 19, "their relations" is qualified by note: "*some*, but not necessarily *all*."
- 103 Line 16, between "Henry VIII", and "a substance", *insert* "? the name of".
Two lines from bottom, *delete* "of all".
- 114 Line 27, *for* "intrinsically", *read* "extrinsically".
- 118 Line 8, comment on "... can know the substance independently of ...":—"Too strong. cp. Note, p. 98. What I mean is that I can know it unambiguously without having a complete description."
- 152 Note on § 139:—"Present' throughout this page is ambiguous. It does not mean anything [?]import[ant] but means actual."
Comment on par. beginning "This result will appear . . .":—"Strictly speaking, it isn't the same substance, but the substances which make it up by succeeding one another. But this fact is often spoken of as I have spoken of it in the text, and the point is that our theory is not incompatible with this fact."
- 171 Line 18, *for* "shopmen", *read* "shopman".
- 176 To footnote, this reference is added:—"Cp. V, 35, p. 5". [McTaggart appears to be referring to the place in his then unpublished MSS. of Vol. II of the *Nature of Existence* which I have identified in that posthumously published work as being: Vol. II, Book V, Chap. 35, § 376 (p. 59).]
- 179 Line 12, *delete* "no" before "content".
- 184 Last two lines of footnote: *for* "it" in both lines, *read* "humanity".
- 191 Line 11, *for* "more than one part", *read* "two or more parts".
- 202 Line 12, *for* "them", *read* "such descriptions".
- 208 Lines 6-7, note on "implied, without including,":—"Ward says Meinong makes this distinction—*Hume-Studien*, II, 156."
- 210 Line 4, note on "a one-to-one relation":—"It is not one-to-one with the substances on *third* assumption." [For "third assumption", see line 8 ff.]
- 214 Note on "And therefore it is necessary . . . is Reciprocal" in last par. of § 201:—"This is necessary, not only for the third case, but for the others too."
[For "the others", see p. 213.]
- 215 Line 3, *for* "points", *read* "parts".
- 222 Line 19, *for* "earlier by the later", *read* "later by the earlier".
Note to second par. of § 210:—"Ambiguous. The 'more' does not go with 'earlier to later', or 'the less' with 'later to earlier'."
Two lines from bottom; *for* "it is taken", *read* "they are taken"; ["it will be" in last line should read "they will be . . ."].
- 226 Footnote:—*Elements of Metaphysics*, *for* "I, 5, Section 5", *read* "II, 5, Section 5".
- 232 Line 8, *for* "or" *read* "on".
- 239 Line 4, after "description", *add* "or at any rate all of them."
Marginal comment on whole of § 225:—"Is this valid? Would it not fix *another* sufficient description of *B/C*, and so cut *all* suff. descr. of *B/C* out of the minimum adequate description? No,

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- I don't think so. For to fix on *another* q[uality] in *B/C!D* would not necessarily give a sufficient description of *B/C!D*, and so would not contribute to a suff. descr. of *B/C*. And, again, if the q[uality] did give a suff. descr. of *B/C!D*, yet *B/C* might have another suff. descr.—besides the one by det[ermining] corr[espondence] and the one by the new suff. descr. of its parts. (See insertion in l. 4.)” [The “insertion” referred to is the entry recorded immediately before this marginal comment.]
- 240 Line 18; for “which *G* has . . .” read “which *C* has . . .”
- 241 Note to § 228 :—“This confuses three possibilities: (1) different sorts of d[etermining] c[orrespondence] with same primary p[art], (2) same sort of d[etermining] c[orrespondence] with different primary parts, (3) both d[etermining] c[orrespondence] and p[rietary] parts different.”
- 246 Line 2, note on “give us” :—“better keep to the phrase in § 229, ‘intrinsically determine’.”
- 266 Last word of § 253; for “composition”, read “manifestation”.
- 280 Note to second par. of § 265 :—“Keynes, in his *Treatise on Probability* (p. 236), holds, I think rightly, that mere repetition of instances does make a thing more likely, but does not by itself ensure that the probability shall ever approach certainty, or become more likely than not. Hence there is no disagreement between us.”
- 286 Comment on § 270 :—“Would this be different if we held that there was only a finite number of qualities, so that the antecedent chance that *X* did determine *Y* was $\frac{1}{100}$? Cp. J. M. Keynes, p. 258.”
- 296 Line 2; “possible” is underlined, and marginal note runs: “Necessary. For in *B/C* the quality of being a part of *B* is not det[ermined] by *C*.”
- 300 Line 15; delete “other” [so reading “all the members of that group.”]
- 310 Index: Corrections and additions :—
 ‘Characteristic’, for “3”, read “5”.
 After ‘Dimension’, insert “Element, 63.”
 ‘Fundamental System’, for “248”, read “247”.
 [‘Minimum Adequate Description’, for “193”, read “194”].
 After ‘Perception’, insert ‘Phaenomenon bene fundatum, 53.’

AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE SPECIAL THEORY OF RELATIVITY.

In a note which I contributed to *MIND* last year,¹ I have discussed the significance of the dual representation of the light-tracks by a point circle and a pair of isotropic lines in a two-dimensional euclidean space-time continuum. The following derivation of Einstein's Mechanics from considerations such as those suggested by classical physics may serve to show that the Lorentz-Einstein transformation regarded as a “general boundary condition” contains an implicit reference to this continuum.

¹ *MIND*, N.S., Vol. xlvi, No. 183, p. 415.