MacCarthy, Sir (Charles Otto) Desmond (1877-1952). Desmond MacCarthy was a literary critic and journalist. Born in Plymouth and raised in Leeds, he was educated at Eton and then Trinity College, Cambridge. There he was elected to the Apostles and began a lifelong friendship with the ethical philosopher G. E. Moore. He also formed close connections with several members of the nascent Bloomsbury Group, of which he was a core member, later serving as secretary for Roger Fry’s first Post-Impressionist Exhibition in 1910. MacCarthy forged a long career as a critic and editor, for such publications as the New Statesman, Life and Letters, and the Sunday Times, and as a popular BBC radio broadcaster. He married the writer Mary (Molly) Warre-Cornish in 1906. MacCarthy published eight collections of reviews and critical essays in his lifetime. Four others appeared posthumously. MacCarthy was a responsive critic, a generous editor (his pen name at the New Statesman was “Affable Hawk”), and a frustrated artist who appreciated but remained dubious about modernist formal experimentation. Comparing him to her Bloomsbury friends, Virginia Woolf, in her diary, calls MacCarthy “the most gifted of us all.” He is buried beside Moore in Cambridge.

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