**McTaggart, J. M. E. (1866-1925)**

Cambridge philosopher, metaphysician, and mystic John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart was a key figure in initiating modernist shifts in philosophy by challenging traditional understandings of Christian theology, dualism, and linear time. Representing a ‘new idealism’, McTaggert deeply believed in the human soul and in its immortal nature, although his modernist rejection of Christian theology led him to argue that no ‘God’ was needed to explain the existence of the universe. Rejecting matter (and the traditional dualism of matter and spirit) as a feature of reality, he argued that reality was composed of qualities and relations dependent on perceptions of individuals. McTaggart’s inclinations towards mysticism led him to declare selves to be timeless, immortal and loving spirits. Renowned also for the two volume *The Nature of Existence* (1921-27), McTaggart engaged with Hegelian dialectical theory but resisted the idea of an all-encompassing concept of the Absolute. In his essay ‘The Unreality of Time’ (1908), he proposed that human experience of time as linear is incoherent; states of affairs cannot sustain properties of being ‘future’, ‘present’ and ‘past’ without being contradictory. A popular teacher at Trinity College, Cambridge, McTaggart cultivated friendships with G. E. Moore (1873-1958) and Bertrand Russell (1872-1970).

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**List of works**

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**References and further reading**

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