C. D. Broad on Precognitions and John William Dunne

Running Head (RH): Broad on Precognitions and J. W. Dunne

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Abstract: C. D. Broad developed three different accounts of time over the course of his career. Emily Thomas has recently argued that the shift from the first to the second of these was motivated by his engagement with the philosophy of Samuel Alexander. In this paper, I argue that the shift from the second to the third was instigated by Broad's engagement with precognitive dreams and with the thought of John William Dunne. Furthermore, I argue that fully appreciating Broad's interest in psychic research in general, and precognitions in particular, is required for understanding the theory of time he defended in the second volume of *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy*. I also argue that interpreting the *Examination* in light of Broad's engagement with Dunne can help remove the inconsistencies in Broad's third account.

List of keywords: C. D. Broad, John William Dunne, precognitions, psychic research, time, dreams

## 1. Introduction

The existing scholarship on C. D. Broad (1887–1971) divides his philosophy of time into three phases. Emily Thomas has shown that the shift from the first to the second of these was due to the influence of Samuel Alexander (1859–1938).[1] This paper will demonstrate that the shift from the second to the third was motivated by Broad's engagement with precognitions and the thought of John William Dunne (1875–1949). I will also argue that Dunne's philosophy holds the key to resolving the inconsistencies in this third account.

Historians of philosophy have generally neglected the role of psychic phenomena in C. D. Broad's thought. The article on Broad in the *Stanford Encyclopedia* only briefly mentions Broad's work on parapsychology, and the Oaklander's recent *Broad's Philosophy of Time* does not mention his psychic research at all.[2] The general tendency is to see psychic and paranormal research as at best a bizarre (and at worst as an embarrassing) thing Broad did on the side. This is despite the fact that Broad was "well known—indeed *infamous*—"[3] for his interest in psychical research. There is a similar silence by historians of philosophy on John William Dunne.[4] Most existing accounts of Dunne's thought have been elaborated by scholars in literary studies.[5] The silence is unfortunate. This is because Dunne was arguably one of the first authors to propose hypertime (the idea that time passes in another, higher-order time series), which is increasingly getting traction in contemporary metaphysics.[6] However, Dunne's neglect is especially unfortunate from Broad scholars since, as this paper will show, the influence of Dunne on Broad is extremely significant.

This paper has four aims. The first is to show that Broad's fascination with precognitive dreams and Dunne shaped the third phase of his philosophy of time. The second aim is to argue that Broad's critical engagement with Dunne can explain the shift from the second phase of his philosophy to the third one. The third aim is to use Broad's engagement with Dunne to propose a coherent interpretation of the third account of time, which has

almost universally been regarded as inconsistent. The fourth aim is to provide an introduction to Dunne, who has so far been severely neglected by the existing literature on early 20th-century philosophy of time.

In section 2, I provide an outline of Broad's three theories of time. In section 3, I give an account of Broad's engagement with psychic phenomena between the second and third phases of his views on time. Section 4 provides an exposition of Dunne and section 5 explores Broad's engagement with Dunne's thought. Section 6 discusses Broad's crucial 1937 paper on precognitions. Section 7 shows how attending to precognitions can help explain (and perhaps resolve) the inconsistent interpretations of Broad's third account of time.

## 2. Broad's Three Philosophies of Time

Thomas and others distinguish three phases of Broad's philosophy of time.[7]

### 2.1. Phase 1

The first phase corresponds to Broad's 1921 article entitled "Time" in the *Encyclopedia of Ethics and Religion*. In the article, Broad defends the Russellian theory of time, which ascribes equal ontological status to all times. The future and the past are symmetrical: future moments are just as real as the past or present ones.[8] This view is most similar to what contemporary philosophers call "eternalism."

### 2.2. Phase 2

The second phase corresponds to Broad's 1923 *Scientific Thought*, which rejects the earlier Russellian account of time. In Phase 2, Broad argues for an asymmetry between the past and the future: the past and the present are real, the future is not (*Scientific Thought*, 66). He thus defends a view that we would now call the "growing block theory." "Absolute becoming,"

the continual addition of "fresh slices of existence" (*Scientific Thought*, 66), is the fundamental basis of temporal change.[9] It accounts for the radical difference between judgements about the past and the future, and also for our lack of knowledge about the latter.[10]

*Scientific Thought* also contains Broad's critique of what eventually came to be known as the "moving spotlight theory" of time, that is, the view that all times are real, but along these equally real times glides the determination of presentness (*Scientific Thought*, 59). There are several reasons why Broad rejected this account, the most significant being that it implies hypertime: the passage of time in another time dimension. And hypertime seems to imply an infinite regress. Oaklander summarises the problem as follows: "If time is introduced in the form of a *moving now*, then time presupposes time since motion implies being at different positions at different times. Thus a second time dimension is required, and other problems follow as well."[11] Broad rejects the moving spotlight and instead defends a theory that affirms the non-existence of the future and that insists on absolute becoming as the addition of new slices of existence.

### 2.3. Phase 3

The final phase corresponds to the account of time in the *Examination* published in 1938.[12] Scholars radically disagree over how best to read this third account and Thomas says that "the details ... are difficult to discern."[13] The problem here is that scholars analysing the *Examination* have been able to read it as supporting three mutually incompatible theories of time.

The first theory of time ascribable to Phase 3 is the growing block theory. This reading is suggested by Mundle or Williams, the latter of whom finds Broad's *Examination* so inconsistent that he simply concludes that Broad's final account was the Phase 2 one.[14]

There are several reasons why scholars have taken the *Examination* to support the growing block theory. In the *Examination*, Broad, again, argues for the existence of absolute becoming and declares that it is not qualitative change (*Examination*, 277, 281, 302, 317). So, one might ask—what else might it be? One possible answer is that it is the coming of events into existence from Phase 2. On this reading, absolute becoming is "a sort of hangover from Broad's second account."[15] Broad's Phase-3 view has other features that could support this interpretation. For example, the *Examination* contains a renewed emphasis on the differences between time and space, an emphasis which is intrinsic to Phase 2 (*Examination,* 267–71, 307).

The second of these theories that Phase 3 could support is eternalism. This interpretation can be found in Mundle, Oaklander, Savitta, and Thomas.[16] To quote just one passage that might support the eternalist reading, Broad describes the dynamic progress of time as follows: "An experience is at one time wholly in the future, ... . It keeps on becoming less and less remotely future. Eventually the earliest phase of it becomes present; ... . Each phase ceases to be present, slips into the immediate past, and then keeps on becoming more and more remotely past." (*Examination*, 266–7) Here it seems like Broad is describing a theory of time which treats both future and present events as being real, but becoming less future, present, and finally more past. On this reading, absolute becoming does not carry any metaphysical meaning or ontological weight at all.[17] Oaklander, for example, reads Broad as explicitly rejecting the growing block theory from Phase 2.[18] This reading is further supported by the fact that Broad now provides the same analysis for statements about the past as he does for those about the future (*Examination,* 316).

The third theory inferable from the *Examination* is presentism. This view is suggested by Thomas.[19] Similarly, Mundle suggests that by 'absolute becoming' Broad might mean the coming of events into being, but not their *continuing* to exist once they have become.[20]

Thomas' interpretation is based on Broad's "Philosophical Implications of Foreknowledge" (1937), several arguments of which reappear in the *Examination*. In the foreknowledge paper, Broad argues that the future and the past have symmetrical ontological status and neither of them is real ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 180).[21]

To diagnose these inconsistencies, I propose to look at the *Examination* from a new angle. My view is that the key to the diagnosis can be found in Broad's discussion of survival after death and supernormal psychic phenomena in chapter 54 of the *Examination*. D. C. Williams seems to be one of the few scholars to have identified this key, though sadly he did not follow it through to shed light on what happens in the *Examination*. Williams claims that Broad shifted away from Phase 2 "on account of certain dream anecdotes"[22] and because "he has been interested in J. W. Dunne's theory of the direct prehension of the future."[23] It is to Broad's interest in psychic phenomena, dreams, and Dunne that we now turn.

## 3. Broad, Psychic Phenomena, and Precognitions

This paper will take the term 'psychic' or 'psychical' in the most general sense as applying to, as one Broad commentator put it, "the various queer kinds of occurrences called Telepathy, Clairvoyance, Precognition, Psychokinesis, Levitation, Apparitions, and so on."[24]

Broad's interest in psychical phenomena dates back to the 1910s.[25] But the best sources of information about his engagement with psychical research are his publications in the *Journal* and *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, published between 1922 and 1959. The topics on which Broad published in the *Society*—whose presidents included William James, or Henri Bergson—range from telepathy and dreaming, to the general methodology of psychical research.[26] Broad also published several of his writings on psychical research for a more general philosophical audience or indeed a non-academic audience altogether.[27] In an autobiographical note, Broad reports: "as my interest in and

attention to contemporary philosophy have declined, my interest in psychical research has increased, and such philosophical abilities as I still have have been more and more directed to theoretical problems arising out of its ostensible findings" ("Autobiographical Notes," 66). The archives at Trinity College, Cambridge contain Broad's extremely thorough notes on psychical research (BROD/D/1/1–8)[28] as well as extensive correspondence from people reporting their own paranormal experiences to him (BROD II, 1). Broad was skeptical about some of the findings of these experiments. As Simon Blackburn put it, "unlike most other pursuers of the topic Broad largely kept his balance."[29] Nevertheless, he still maintained that, once the fraudulent data was removed, there remained a significant number of cases calling for the attention of researchers (*Mind and Its Place in Nature,* 514; "Ostensibly Paranormal Physical Phenomena," 312–13). He thought that it was *discounting* these phenomena from philosophical research that smacked of irrationality: "The serene indifference or complacent quarter-knowledge with which most philosophers and psychologists dismiss this mass of carefully sifted material, which must (on *any* interpretation of it) be vitally important to their studies, is evidently due to some very strong and deeply rooted non-rational cause" ("Science and Psychical Phenomena," 466). Nevertheless, he was very defensive about "his interest in the paranormal, clearly recognising that many of his colleagues would have regarded such research as at best, marginal, and at worst, disreputable."[30] The best example of this is his paper given to the Aristotelian Society and Mind Association in 1937, where he raises a worry that many will accuse both societies of "having gone spooky" ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 177) by allowing him to present on precognitions. And they did. In his comments on Broad's paper, Antony Flew cautions that "parapsychology is an academically disreputable business which no philosopher of standing ought to take seriously, much less to support."[31]

Although Broad indeed believed that some of the psychic phenomena were real, his primary interest consisted in exploring the philosophical consequences that would ensue *if* they turned out genuine.[32] He thought these consequences were so interesting that the possibility of such phenomena should be studied regardless of whether they occur or not.[33] Specifically, he thought there were certain "basic limiting principles" ("Relevance of Psychical Research," 7) deemed as the presuppositions of scientific and philosophical research, which would be invalidated if paranormal phenomena occurred. The violations of these principles include backward causation, direct action of mind on matter or other minds (without going via the brain), or a third way of acquiring knowledge (especially about the future) which is not based either on inference or sensation ("Relevance of Psychical Research," 9–12). Precognitive dreams present a challenge to these limiting principles—and some of the problems they raised were brought up by John William Dunne.

## 4. John William Dunne

Broad's fascination with the possibility of cognitive access to the future through dreams formed the backdrop of his engagement with Dunne, chronologically situated between Phase 2 and Phase 3 of his philosophy of time. This section will introduce Dunne's philosophy to provide a background to Broad's engagement with precognitions.

John William Dunne (1875–1949) was born in Ireland, became a soldier and engineer in his early years, eventually turned to philosophy (though never as an academic) and wrote several books on time, consciousness, and dreams. It was his *An Experiment With Time* from 1927, re-published in several editions, that made him truly famous.[34]

Dunne's books have had a significant influence on several major literary figures of the 20th century, including J. L. Borges, J. B. Priestley, T. S. Eliot, C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien

or H. G. Wells.[35] Wells was influenced by Dunne (whom he knew personally) but his *Time Machine* also crops up in Dunne's own book (*Experiment* 1927, 106).[36]

*An Experiment With Time* has a twofold goal. The first is to provide evidence for precognitive dreams. The second is to develop a hypertime theory (called "serialism") that is supposed to explain why precognitive dreams occur.

Dunne did not think of himself as a psychic. He tried to appeal to the best available science of the time, for example, relativity theory (*Experiment* 1927, 93, 108–11) or the work of Arthur Eddington (*Experiment* 1929, 109, 127, 193–96). He stresses in the very first paragraph of the *Experiment* that "This is not a book about occultism." (*Experiment* 1927, 1)

This was certainly not true of Dunne's subsequent works. *An Experiment With Time* starts off as a project in the theory of dreams and time but forms the basis of his later extension of serialism to other areas of human enquiry. Already towards the end of the *Experiment*, he argues that serialism can be used to explain immortality (*Experiment* 1927, 162–63, 187, 207), or telepathy (*Experiment* 1927, 207). In *The Serial Universe* from 1934, he tries to demonstrate that serialism is the basis of all science.[37] In *The New Immortality* from 1938, he applies serialism to the existence of the soul. Finally, in the posthumously published *Intrusions?* from 1955, Dunne suggests that the dreams which he recorded in *An Experiment* were dictated to him by voices emanating from a "Universal Mind." He just omitted them for fear of coming across as too occult.

The first half of Dunne's *Experiment* is dedicated to a catalogue of precognitive dreams, devising a method for verifying that these were indeed precognitive, and instructions on how to train oneself to see the future not just in dreams, but also in waking life. Dunne treats precognitive dreams as a "temporal disturbance" in the structure of time.[38] They were experiences "*displaced in Time*" (*Experiment* 1927, 44, italics original). Most of them revolve around disastrous "traumatic or violent events [that] somehow fragmented time

itself."[39] In devising a method for verifying these, Dunne presents himself as a careful experimenter. He even expresses the worry that "I had never really had any such dream at all; but that, on reading the newspaper report, a false idea had sprung up in my mind to the effect that I had previously dreamed a dream containing all the details given in that paragraph" (*Experiment* 1927, 27). His method for verifying these dreams was supposed to shield him from what we would now call confirmation bias (*Experiment* 1927*,* 61). Once Dunne has established that the dreams were truly precognitive, he offers guidance on how to train oneself to see the future both in dreams, but also by changing the focus of our attention in waking life. "Dreaming the future" was not just for seers and clairvoyants. Anyone could do this (*Experiment* 1927, 2).

The second half of the book develops a theory of time capable of explaining precognitions. This is Dunne's serialism. Dunne starts by observing that an eternalist account of time, where all the events in time simply exist, is insufficient. It is like a sheet of piano music that does not indicate which part of it is being played *right now*: "In order to complete the symbol, it was intended that the player's point of vision should *travel* from left to right along the model Time dimension, and that the written chords should be played as this moving point, representing the moving 'present,' reached them" (*Experiment* 1927, 97). So time must move across this series. But if time moves, Dunne says, there must be a hypertime that the lower-level time moves in: "a sort of Time behind Time is the legitimate consequence of having started with the hypothesis of a *movement* through Time's length. For motion in Time must be timeable. If the moving element is everywhere along the Time length at once, it is not moving. But the Time which times that movement is another Time. And the 'passage' of that Time must be timetable by a third time. And so on *ad infinitum*" (*Experiment* 1927, 96, italics original). Dunne, therefore, postulates an infinite series of times, each one of which contains the one in the level below. There "must be another Time which times that activity of,

or along, the first Time, and another Time which times that second Time, and so on in an apparent series to infinity" (*Experiment* 1927, 124). The infinite regress that Broad thought was an argument against the moving spotlight theory is accepted by Dunne as an inevitable consequence of the structure of time.

This infinite series of times corresponds to an infinite series of observers that occupy them. The first time is our observation of the three-dimensional space around us. But since this observation takes time, there exists a second observer who observes the observation of the first, including the fact that the latter's observations occur at different points of time. These two observers are not different people. They are both somehow contained within the single self (*Experiment* 1927, 153). Observer 2 is a meta-self that observes the observations of Observer 1. The best analogy I have been able to use to explain this is Frankfurt's hierarchical account of desires.[40] Just as one person can have second-order desires about first-order desires, Dunne thinks we can have second-time-series observations about first-time-series observations, both of which are contained within the same self. But of course, this implies that there is also an Observer 3 who observes the meta-observations of Observer 2 and so on up to a final observer at infinity: "At infinity, again, we shall have a Time which serves to time all movements of or in the various fields of presentation. This time will be '*Absolute Time*,' with an absolute past, present, and future. The present moment of this absolute time must contain all the moments, 'past,' 'present,' and 'future,' of all the subordinate dimensions of time" (*Experiment* 1927, 150–51, italics original). This series of observers can, in turn, explain our cognitive access to the future when dreaming. I said earlier that the best way to think of Observer 1 and Observer 2 is as two levels of the same self. Dunne thinks that in dreams we can jump from one level to the next. As Galavotti explains: "Observer$_1$ is immersed in a three-dimensional space, where he lives and makes experiences which are observed by Observer$_2$. The latter, however, is located in four-dimensional Time$_2$,

where not only the past, but also the future are open to him. What happens is that while $Observer_1$ is awake, he captures the attention of $Observer_2$ who basically just registers the experiences of $Observer_1$, but when the latter is asleep $Observer_2$ is free to range freely between past and future, and occasionally this brings about precognitive dreams."[41]

But how is this possible? Dunne's answer consists of appealing to *attention*. In everyday life, the series of mental images going through our minds is limited by attention to the *present*. However, in dreams, when we are freed from the constraints of practical utility, attention can range randomly over the entire associational network of observations of the other observers higher up which extend indefinitely into the past and into the future (*Experiment* 1927, 25, 160–62). Our attention to the present moment is "due to a purely mentally imposed barrier which existed only when we were awake. So that, in reality the associational network stretched, not merely this way and that way in Space, but also backwards and forwards in Time; and the dreamer's attention, following in natural, unhindered fashion the easiest pathway among the ramifications, would be continually crossing and recrossing that properly non-existent equator which we, waking, ruled quite arbitrarily athwart the whole" (*Experiment* 1927, 54). This explains why we can see the future when dreaming: "Granted that the dreaming attention ranges about the associational network without paying heed to any particular 'present,' there is nothing astonishing in its lighting on any image many years 'ahead'" (*Experiment* 1927, 82). Serialism thus starts with an observation about precognitions, then applies it to the nature of temporal observation, and then concludes that, since what appears future to Observer 1 may well be contained in the observational present of an observer higher up in the series, precognitive dreams are not really that surprising after all.

Dunne's temporal ontology is a blend of eternalism and the moving spotlight theory. The future must *exist* in order for it to be available for observation by the observers higher up

in the series (*Experiment* 1927, 104). Yet the observational field glides over the series of existing events, much like the policeman's bull's-eye in Broad. Dunne rejects the growing-block theory of time, which he ascribed to Bergson (*Experiment* 1927, 118–21; *Experiment* 1929, 119–21) but which, already at this time became associated with Broad.[42]

Interestingly, Dunne thinks that the two aspects of the book (precognitions and serialism) can be treated separately (*Experiment* 1927, 163). Nearly all of those who have commented on the book during Dunne's lifetime agreed.[43] Serialism, Dunne says, is an independent theory of time regardless of whether precognitive dreams occur or not. But if they do, then serialism is the best way to explain why (*Experiment* 1927, 159).

## 5. Broad and Dunne

The wider context of Broad's work following the publication of Dunne's *Experiment* shows a heightened interest in precognitions and dreams. Cambridge University Library stores extensive correspondence with F. H. Saltmarsh (member of the *Society for Psychical Research* and author of the influential volume *Foreknowledge*) on the topic of precognitions dating between 1933 and 1938. Of particular interest here are letters from 1933 (UL SPR MS 51/2/4–5) and 1937 (UL SPR MS 51/2/6–7) discussing different theoretical options for explaining paranormal knowledge of the future.[44]

There is ample evidence that Broad was working under the influence of Dunne's philosophy between 1927 and 1938. This evidence can be classified into three categories, which this section will explore: Broad's general interest in dreams and dreaming triggered (indirectly) by Dunne's *Experiment*, unpublished materials written by Broad, and his published works mentioning Dunne. I address these in turn.

## 5.1. Dreams and Dreaming

Dunne's book occasioned a heightened interest in dreams, dreaming and their records.[45] "Dunne's influence ... was such that talk of 'Dunne's dreams' became commonplace: probably a favourite topic of conversation at parties."[46] The *Society for Psychical Research* had already been gathering dream records prior to the publication of Dunne's book.[47] But it was Dunne's *Experiment* that intensified their focus on dreams and precognitions, which eventually resulted in T. Besterman's large-scale inquiry into precognitive dreams.[48]

Broad was part of this trend. The Broad papers at Trinity College contain Broad's dream book detailing dreams recorded between 1932 and 1939 (BROD/D/1/10). It specifically mentions that all the dreams experienced in 1932 were recorded "in connexion with an experiment of the S. P. R. [the Society for Psychical Research]" (BROD/D/1/10, 19). Broad even submitted a record of one of his dreams for publication in the journal of the *Society* ("Ostensibly Precognitive Dream Unfulfilled") and his *Notebooks on Psychical Research* (BROD/D/1/1–8) contain extensive notes on sources dealing with precognitive dreaming.

## 5.2. Unpublished Materials

The fact that Broad was fascinated by dreams only provides indirect evidence for Dunne's influence. But there is also direct evidence proving that Broad's fascination with Dunne went much deeper.

The best examples are Broad's own copies of the (third) 1934 edition of *An Experiment With Time* (33.c.93.3), the (first) 1934 edition of *The Serial Universe* (33.c.93.2), and the 1938 (first) edition of *The New Immortality* (LL 995 D 107), all of them with extensive marginal notes. Broad must have obtained the last two of these soon after publication since *The Serial Universe* was first published in 1934—but is already referenced

in Broad's 1935 paper on Dunne ("Mr. Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time,'" 185)—and Broad mentions reading *The New Immortality*—published first in 1938—in a letter to Saltmarsh from 8th November 1938 (UL SPR MS 51/2/11). Broad must have also been aware of Dunne's theory prior to 1934 (when the edition of *An Experiment* that he owned was published), since Saltmarsh mentions it in a letter to Broad from 29th June 1933 (UL SPR MS 51/2/5). It is also worth noting in passing that prior to 1934, none of Broad's publications dealt with dreams and precognitions. His most significant publications on these topics were published immediately in the years after 1934, when the third edition of the *Experiment*, which he owned, was released.[49]

Most of Broad's notes in the margins are critical. Some aspects of Dunne are "hopelessly confused" (33.c.93.2, 55), "unintelligible" (33.c.93.2, 154), or a "frightful muddle" (33.c.93.3, 152). But in a significant number of places, Broad tries to think of ways in which Dunne's theory could be improved, for example, by removing the highly anthropocentric notion of "observers" and replacing them with "records" or "recorders" (33.c.93.2, 51–2, 71, 87). He also tried to think of ways that serialism could be mathematically or geometrically represented better than in Dunne's original version (33.c.93.3, 172; LL 995 D 107, 53). This includes entire pages covered in logical notation capturing Dunne's theory (33.c.93.2, 60–61), a whole diagram that Broad glued into one of the books (33.c.93.2, 156), or the development of an example involving a sheet of glass and a blue line moving across a field that, Broad thinks, best illustrates the movement of time that Dunne talks about (33.c.93.3, 179).

The Trinity archives also contain a copy of the issue of *Philosophy* where Broad's article on Dunne (discussed below) was published (Adv.c.27.80). This contains marginal notes on the section dealing with Hinton that I address below, suggesting Broad's interest in Dunne did not culminate in the publication of the 1935 paper but continued in the period

after. According to Broad's records (BROD/F/4), in April 1935 Broad also lent a copy of this specific issue of *Philosophy* to H. A. C. Dobbs, whose theory of time he later addressed in a paper from 1951.[50] Broad's "Notes on Metaphysics," most likely written before 1938, contain a section entitled "Definitions concerning change" with a stand-alone section which simply says "Time [underlined]. Deal with Dunne's Theory and 'The Adventure'" (BROD/C/1/79, 5).[51]

5.3. Published Materials

The attempts to rectify Dunne's serialism persist in Broad's only published paper dedicated exclusively to Dunne, "Mr Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time'" which appeared in *Philosophy* in 1935 and was republished again with a slightly altered title in Broad's *Religion, Philosophy and Psychical Research*.

The paper has three aims: (1) to explain the philosophy of time in *An Experiment With Time*, (2) to see whether it successfully resolves the question of precognitions, and (3) to explore other reasons for accepting it beyond the fact that it can explain precognitive dreams. Broad spends the first three pages of the paper outlining a theory of spatial manifolds using sets of independent variables. With the highly technical apparatus set up, Broad moves on to apply it to the idea that stationary objects in lower dimensions appear as moving objects in planes of higher dimensions moving across them ("Mr Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time,'" 170). This was suggested by Hinton's *Fourth Dimension* which significantly shaped Dunne's *Experiment*:[52]

> Suppose that there were a *material thread* at rest in a *plane*, ... . Suppose that a certain *straight line* moved in this plane with a uniform velocity at right angles to itself. Provided that the thread always makes an angle of less than 90 with the direction in

> which the moving line travels, the moving line will cut the thread in a *point* at each moment and in a different point at each different moment. Suppose that there were an observer whose field of observation at any moment is confined to the contents of the moving line at that moment. Instead of perceiving a *stationary thread* he would perceive a *moving particle* occupying various positions in the various lines which constitute his successive fields. ("Mr Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time,'" 170–71, italics original)

The idea here is simple: the material thread which is *static* in the plane appears as a single point *moving* up and down a line which moves across the thread. A helpful analogy here is looking at an arcuate power line (held up by posts every few meters) running alongside a train track. As you look out of the window of the train, the line appears to move up and down in your field of vision (as a single point, if you imagine that the window is just a narrow vertical slit). This is even though the line itself is static.

Dunne's theory re-applies the same method to the very movement of the field itself. Or in other words, it is not just a question of how the stationary object appears in the field moving across it, but also of how this moving appearance itself appears in even higher dimensions ("Mr Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time,'" 173). And this procedure can, according to Dunne, be repeated *ad infinitum*. Where Hinton postulated a higher dimension to explain how a seemingly stationary object can appear as moving in the field of observation that moves across it, Dunne postulates a higher dimension for each one of these fields.

Broad says that Hinton's one additional dimension is enough to explain movement ("Mr Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time,'" 173). However, he thinks that even though postulating these higher moving dimensions to explain motion is

unnecessary, there might be another use for it, namely, to explain precognitions ("Mr Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time,'" 173). To see this, let us use the earlier analogy of the train.[53] Your view of the power line from the window represents the view of Observer 1. The view of the whole power line at once (say, from a hill above the train track) represents the view of Observer 2. The following quotation from Broad, altered to explain the example here, explains the relation between the two: "Thus Observer [2] perceives at *every moment* those [sections of the power line] which the field of Observer [1] *has intersected*, but is no longer intersecting, and those [sections of the power line] which the field of Observer [1] *will intersect*, but has not yet intersected. What Observer [1] perceives *successively* as a *series of events constituting the [sections of the power line]* is perceived *simultaneously* by Observer [2] as an *unchanging wavy thread*."[54] If, for a minute, Observer 2 could focus their attention just on the window of the train, they would become Observer 1. Similarly, if Observer 1 could expand their attention to make their field of observation coincide with the entire length of the power line, they would become Observer 2. This is precisely what Dunne claims happens in dreams.

Furthermore, Dunne thinks that this higher dimension can explain why we can take preventative action as a result of the precognitive dream. Imagine that the powerline on the train represents your life history. If Observer 1 (in the expanded dream state of Observer 2) observes an event further ahead of their field of observation on the power line that they do not want to intersect (for example, the line being on fire), they can, when returning to their normal waking attention (sitting on the train by the window), take an action that prevents the event from happening before they get there (for example, phoning the next train station and informing them of the fire before the train gets there).

Or in other words, precognising something does not mean that it must happen. This presents a problem. As some commentators have pointed out, these precognitions are not

actually cognitions at all, since the events they are about might not occur.[55] So what is it that we actually "see" in the dream? Dunne seems to be aware of this difficulty himself when he asks: "The future events are, at any rate, real enough to be experienced as pre-presentations; yet—since, as we have just seen, the observer can alter his course of action as the result of this pre-observation—they are events which, theoretically, may be prevented from happening. Are we, then, to say that they are only partly real—less real, for instance than are past events?" (*Experiment* 1927, 92) Dunne's answer is inconsistent or at best highly ambiguous: some sections of the *Experiment* seem to imply that future events exist and Observer 2 can have direct cognitive access to them. But other passages of the *Experiment*—which try to avoid the charge of fatalism—seem to deny that these events are "real" in the sense of being set in stone. This is because we can prevent them from happening. Broad partially clarifies this ambiguity by distinguishing between the event itself and its image, a move that we will discuss in more detail in the following section. It is only the image that features in the precognition.

Thus, introducing Dunne's higher series, according to Broad, can explain both precognitions and ward off worries about fatalism. So why not just accept Dunne's serialism? The problem is, Broad argues, that once we introduce *one* higher dimension, the process can, indeed, be repeated indefinitely: "If it is *necessary* to start this process, there is no stage at which it is not equally necessary to continue it" ("Mr Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time,'" 184). But at the same time starting this process seems a reasonable thing to do to explain precognitions: "If it is justifiable at all, it is justifiable *only* on the empirical ground that there are cases of Precognition and that they can be explained by taking the second step and not otherwise" ("Mr Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time,'" 184). Broad's paper thus ends on an odd note. If precognitions are real, we have to postulate a higher dimension to explain them. But if we do that, we should do this infinitely

and end up with the type of vicious regress made famous by McTaggart's argument ("Mr Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time,'" 185).[56] This regress is not as harmless as Dunne thinks and is just as harmful as McTaggart thought: "If this regress is involved in the notion of time, it is vicious, and the notion of time must be rejected as delusive" ("Mr Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time,'" 184).

Broad's interest in Dunne did not end in 1935. Dunne shows up in many of Broad's other published writings. Broad references Dunne's dreams as one of the three types of supernormal cognition in his presidential address to the *Society for Psychical Research* from 1935.[57] Dunne turns up in Broad's review of a book by G. N. M. Tyrrell from 1938 ("Science and Psychical Phenomena," 470). In his 1937 paper, Broad specifically says that when it comes to explaining precognitions, "The only theory ... which seems worth consideration is that proposed by Mr. Dunne in his *Experiment With Time*" ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 178).

Most importantly for our purposes, Dunne is mentioned in several places in the *Examination*, both in the main text (*Examination,* 279, 280, 546) and in the preface (*Examination*, lxxi). In the final section, I will demonstrate that Dunne's influence extends beyond these cursory references and that Dunne's "highly ingenious" (*Examination*, 280) explanation of precognition shaped the theory of time in Broad's Phase 3. But before we turn to Broad's *Examination*, we must make a brief detour.

## 6. Philosophical Implications of Foreknowledge

Broad's 1937 paper "Philosophical Implications of Foreknowledge" published in the *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* addresses three objections against the possibility of precognitions: epistemological, causal, and fatalistic. He explicitly mentions Dunne's dreams about the future as one of three paradigmatic types of supernormal cognition, the

other being the cognition of present or past events—clairvoyance or telepathy ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 177).

The epistemic objection goes as follows: if an object is precognised, then it must exist. But this means that precognition is not really *pre*-cognition, since the prefix 'pre' implies that the object does not yet exist at the time of knowing. Pre-cognition seems self-contradictory: "It implies that O [the event] stood in a certain relation to P [the pre-knower] at a time when O did not exist, and therefore could not stand in any relation to anything" ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 180). Broad neutralises the objection by pointing out that if it were accepted, it would destroy the possibility of *memory* as well. If we can remember things that *no longer* exist, there is nothing contradictory in foreseeing events that do not *yet* exist. Just as in memory, we do not have direct immediate cognitive access to the event but instead cognise the present *image* of the event, so in dreams too we prehend the present *image* of the foreseen event: "*Something* is prehended, but it is the present image and not the foreseen future event" ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 187, italics original).[58] And the image might not correspond to the future event since, as a result of recording the dream, we might change the course of events to prevent the event from happening.

The epistemic objection is worthy of our attention for two reasons. The first reason is that it directly appeals to Broad's arguments for the possibility of interfering with the future that he utilized in analyzing Dunne. Dunne suggested that in precognitions we might not be directly acquainted with the precognised events but instead with their less real images. Broad agrees. And he uses the distinction between the precognised image and the event that it represents in his refutation of the epistemic objection. (Broad does not reference Dunne on this point here, although Flew notes the similarity.[59]) The second reason why Broad's treatment of the epistemic objection is significant is that, as Thomas suggests, the 1937 paper seems to argue for presentism: the future has the same ontological status as the past, namely,

non-existence. If this reading is correct (more on this below), the 1937 paper presents a notable departure from Broad's growing block theory of Phase 2, where the past existed but the future did not.

The causal objection states that it is difficult to work out how a future event can cause its present precognition, a problem Dunne himself noticed (*Experiment* 1927, 91, 199). Normally, our cognitions are the effects of causes that precede them. How can this work in the case of precognitions? "An experience which has not yet happened can have no causal descendants until it has happened" ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 190).

Broad's response to the causal objection bears the mark of Dunne's influence. After discussing several options for resolving this problem, Broad says that we should accept Dunne's postulation of a hypertime (but just *not* follow Dunne all the way to his infinite regress): "And, although I am wholly dissatisfied with Mr Dunne's detailed explanation as it stands, ... , I do think that there is at least a chance of working out a satisfactory theory on his general lines" ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 199). The idea here is simple: something can be the causal descendant of something else in one time dimension, but also be its causal ancestor in a different time dimension ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 200–202). Broad calls this suggestion "fantastic" ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 203) but considers it to be the least of the evils one is faced with in trying to account for precognitions.[60] Of course, it could be objected that hypertime originated not with Dunne but with Bradley or McTaggart. But neither of the two is referenced in this connection here. Dunne is.

The third objection that Broad considers is the fatalistic one. Most people think, Broad says, that precognising an event implies that the event is predetermined ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 205). Broad gets around this problem by distinguishing between an event being *predeterminate* and being *predetermined*. Being *predeterminate* primarily has to do with judgements about future events, which can involve fully specified future events

("Implications of Foreknowledge," 206). By contrast, being *predetermined* has to do with the way one event entails another, which can very well involve our own voluntary causal contribution ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 204). A future event can be predeterminate (and thus precognised) without necessarily being predetermined ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 207). For example, if you foresee yourself drinking a cup of tea, that does not mean that the boiling of the water for the tea was not a causal consequence of your own free choice.

Here again, we see Dunne's influence. The fact that Dunne's theory seems to lead to fatalism has been pointed out by many.[61] Dunne was aware of the problem himself (*Experiment* 1927, 182–84). Broad used the methods he developed to analyse Dunne's account of intervention in the time-series to respond to the worry about fatalism. In his 1935 paper, he had already insisted that just because we precognise (determinately) a particular event in the future when dreaming, this does not mean we cannot prevent it.

## 7. Time in the *Examination*

This section will argue for two claims, one weaker, one stronger. The weaker claim is that Broad's third account is inconsistent—and that the different interpretations of it offered by scholars simply highlight different incompatible claims that it contains—but that this inconsistency should be understood as arising out of Broad's engagement with Dunne and precognitions. The stronger claim is that hypertime might offer a way of reading the *Examination* that harmonises its incompatible interpretations and possibly removes the inconsistency altogether.

It is worth mentioning that instead of conceding that there is an inconsistency (the weaker claim) or trying to resolve it (the stronger claim), one might dispute the legitimacy of the background presuppositions against which it arises in the first place. One might simply

argue that trying to read the *Examination* through the lens of contemporary temporal ontologies (eternalism, presentism, the growing block theory etc.) is anachronistic. There are several reasons why this move might seem attractive. The first is that the distinction between the temporal ontologies is a relatively recent one in analytic philosophy and not every historical thinker writing about time can easily be accommodated in it. The second is that the legitimacy of the distinction between the temporal ontologies is itself disputed regardless of whether it applies to Broad or not.[62] The third is that questions about the ontology of time do not seem to be of paramount importance to Broad in the *Examination*, certainly not the way they were in Phase 2. His focus is on temporal experience. This would also explain why the key definition he gives of absolute becoming is so devoid of any hints about temporal ontology: "To 'become present' is, in fact, just to 'become,' in an absolute sense; ... or most simply, to 'happen.' ... I do not suppose that so simple and fundamental a notion as that of absolute becoming can be analysed" (*Examination*, 280–81). One might just take what Broad says here at face value. If absolute becoming cannot be analysed *tout court*, then it certainly cannot be analysed as the coming of events into existence (the growing block reading), their coming into existence and out of it (the presentist reading), or as their somehow existing but successively acquiring A-series characteristics (the eternalist reading). Perhaps we just have to accept that absolute becoming does not carry any ontological weight.

I will not go down this route. Denying the backdrop against which the inconsistency arises is certainly an option. However, although it might make the inconsistency go out of focus, it does not remove the existing tensions around what absolute becoming is altogether. More importantly, in Phases 2 and 3, Broad was certainly happy to adopt ontologies that map fairly unproblematically onto the distinction between eternalism and the growing block theory. So analysing what happens in Phase 3 using the same categories is not anachronistic. If the categories suddenly become inapplicable in Phase 3, there must be a reason. This

reason, as we are about to see, lies in Broad's engagement with precognitions and Dunne between Phases 2 and 3.

### 7.1. Weaker Claim

On the weaker reading, the *Examination* simply puts together three independent views about time, based on three different motivations arising from Broad's work on Dunne's hypertime theory and precognitions. The juxtaposition of these three strands of thought generates the inconsistency.

The presentist strand is motivated by the solution to the epistemic objection against foreknowledge that we encountered in the previous section and that Broad developed in the period immediately before the publication of the *Examination*.

The growing block strand carries over the commitment to absolute becoming from Phase 2. But this is not just a "hangover"[63] of the ideas from *Scientific Thought*. Whereas the critique of the moving spotlight theory in *Scientific Thought* was linked to the type of regress we find in McTaggart's argument, in the *Examination* Broad explicitly raises a worry that it leads to Dunne's regress: "There is no stage at which one could consistently stop in postulating further time-dimensions and events of a higher order. It is a great merit of Mr J. W. Dunne, in his two books An Experiment With Time and The Serial Universe, to have insisted on what is substantially the same fact as this. Unfortunately he persuades himself, by false analogies with infinite series which have limits, that the regress is harmless" (*Examination*, 279–80).[64] Dunne's problem is even more severe than McTaggart's, since Dunne is clearly a realist about time, whereas "McTaggart, unlike Mr Dunne, has to deal only with the *delusive appearance* of absolute becoming" (*Examination*, 546, italics original).[65] How can this issue be resolved? Recall Broad's claim towards the end of his 1935 paper on Dunne that if one makes the step to just one higher dimension, Dunne's regress follows. So

we have to make sure not to take that step. And Broad's solution, expressed on the very same page where Dunne's regress is discussed in the *Examination*, is to point out that becoming present is distinct from qualitative change: "To 'become present' is, in fact, just to 'become,' in an absolute sense; ... . Sentences like 'This water became hot' or 'This noise became louder' record facts of *qualitative change*. Sentences like 'This event became present' record facts of *absolute becoming*. ... It is therefore hopeless to expect to treat absolute becoming as if it were a particular case of qualitative change. The endless series of time-dimensions and of orders of events, which such an attempt involves, is the sign and the measure of its futility" (*Examination*, 280–81, italics original). In this passage, Broad argues that if becoming is not a qualitative change timeable by another time-series, then one does not need to look to this further time-series (like Dunne did) to explain it. Taking becoming to be qualitative change is, according to Broad, precisely the mistake that Dunne made: "One is reminded of poor Mr Dunne who, spatialising time at one stage after another, is doomed to chase the transitory factor, which distinguishes time from all other series, to higher and higher dimensions, until he loses breath" (*Examination*, 546). If absolute becoming cannot be qualitative change, it seems like it has to be the coming of slices of reality into existence from Phase 2. This is equivalent to the growing block theory.

The eternalist strand is partially motivated by Broad's suggestion that we could in fact have direct cognitive access to future events in dreams. The entire argumentative structure of "Mr Dunne's Theory of Time" proceeds along eternalist lines, with minor qualifications to do with how (real) precognised future events can be prevented. More importantly, towards the end of "Philosophical Implications of Foreknowledge"—the very same text whose earlier section on the epistemic objection against precognitions Thomas uses to support the competing presentist interpretation—, Broad suggests that Dunne's theory offers a way of accounting for *direct* prehension of (existing) future events. He claims that we can use

Dunne's hypertime theory to give meaning to the claim that "an event which has not yet happened 'co-exists with' the foreseeing of it, and therefore in some sense 'already exists'" ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 200). (We will return to this idea in the next section. For now, it suffices to point out that affirming direct prehension of future events would commit Broad to eternalism and make the foreknowledge paper inconsistent on its own, since it would be simultaneously committed to and denying the existence of the future and the past.) Another good illustration of Broad's pull towards eternalism in the period leading up to the *Examination* is the fact that he now explicitly links McTaggart's philosophy with the possibility of direct precognitions. Already in his unpublished Notes on Psychical Research, he states that "McTaggart's theory involves telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and retrocognition" (BROD/D/1/2, 99). But this observation also makes its way to the *Examination*, framed within a reading implying the independent existence of future events: "In §677 [of the *Nature of Existence*] McTaggart throws out a very interesting suggestion. It is conceivable, he thinks, that we may ostensibly image events which, *sub specie temporis*, we never have ostensibly prehended because they are still future. Our ostensible imaging of such events would be, *sub specie temporis*, an introspectively misprehended pre-prehension of an event which has not yet happened. In view of the fact that there is fairly good evidence that non-inferential precognitions happen ... this suggestion of McTaggart's becomes more than an idle speculation" (*Examination*, 24).

On the weaker reading, therefore, Broad's third account is inconsistent. The inconsistency is due to several different motivations underlying three different strands of thought arising out of his engagement with Dunne and precognitions. The motivating factor behind the growing-block strand is the attempt to avoid Dunne's regress. The motivating factor behind the eternalist strand is Broad's suggestion that Dunne's theory could explain

*direct* cognition of future events. And finally, the motivating factor behind the presentist strand is his response to the epistemic objection.

7.2. Stronger Claim

I have so far argued that explaining the origins of the incompatible interpretations of Phase 3 requires looking at what happened before Broad wrote the *Examination*. Looking at what happened after can perhaps harmonise them. The Trinity archives (BROD C/1/80) contain extensive notes and correspondence on H. A. C. Dobbs' paper on two-dimensional time.[66] And time containing two distinct series is also discussed in Broad's "Reply to my Critics" from 1959. Is it possible that, despite his rejection of it in *Scientific Thought*, Broad held a hypertime view in the *Examination*? And can hypertime help resolve the mutually incompatible readings of Broad's Phase 3 available in the existing literature?

The crucial though little-known text suggesting that Phase 3 defends hypertime is Broad's discussion with H. H. Price following the former's presentation of the precognition paper at the *Aristotelian Society.* This paper is not mentioned at all by any of the scholars addressing Broad's three theories in section 1 of this paper.[67] The discussion was published separately to Broad's "Philosophical Implications of Foreknowledge" and was entitled "Philosophical Implications of Precognition."[68]

In the discussion, Price claims that although hypertime is extremely effective in explaining precognitions, it is unable to incorporate absolute becoming. This is because hypertime forces us to accept the absurd notion of "partial becoming" ("Implications of Precognition," 225), where the very same events are deemed as having a different ontological status depending on which of the series they happen to feature in. Suppose I precognise an event due to happen next Saturday: "In one respect, this event has not yet come into being: it is still future, and does not yet exist. But in another respect, it is past, and so *has* come into

being. It is to speak *half-real*; it has *partially become* but not wholly. When next Saturday arrives ... it will receive its second instalment of being, and will then be completely real" ("Implications of Precognition," 225). Price briefly considers a potential solution to this problem. Perhaps each of the two dimensions of time applies to different types of events. On this reading, physical events (standing in relations of earlier and later) feature in the second time series, whereas our mental cognitions and precognitions of them (being past, present and future) feature in the first time series. And it is only the first time series that contains absolute becoming. Price rejects this solution because it would result in psychical (series one) and physical (series two) events being different kinds of entities having "*different sorts of reality* (if that means anything)" ("Implications of Precognition," 227, italics original).

Broad's response acknowledges the utility of hypertime for explaining precognitions. He says that "it is greatly to be wished that the two-dimensional theory were intelligible" ("Implications of Precognition," 249), but ultimately says that he does not know how to fix the problem raised by Price ("Implications of Precognition," 240). More importantly for our purposes, Broad says that the problem of partial becoming highlighted by Price is one that also inadvertently slipped into the *Examination*: "I have had occasion to puzzle myself a great deal over these matters in the last two years, and I hope that the results will appear quite soon now in Vol. II of my *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy*. But although I think I have cleared up some muddles, nothing that I have done has enabled me to answer the difficulties which prof. Price raises here" ("Implications of Precognition," 240–41). And, immediately following this passage, Broad explicitly admits that despite his temptation to abandon the hypertime in the *Examination*, he did not do so: "I am glad that I did not strangle my probably nonsensical suggestion [of the two-dimensional theory] at birth, as I was strongly tempted to do so. For Prof. Price has shown that it would have such interesting applications, if only it could be made intelligible, that one is encouraged to try to make it so"

("Implications of Precognition," 241). If we accept Broad's confession to not strangling the hypertime theory at birth and as describing what goes on in the *Examination*, then the *Examination's* insistence on absolute becoming being "fundamental" and "self-evident" (*Examination*, 546) gets sharper contours. It is fundamental because it is only to be found in the first series and irreducible to whatever happens in the second one. As we saw in section 4, this move ensures that Broad can appeal to Dunne's hypertime theory for explaining precognitions but avoids the regress to which it leads. But it comes with the problm of partial becoming which, Broad admits, Price is right in deeming irresolvable.

If we can trust what Broad says in the 1937 discussion, then hypertime was not just a view that he briefly held for the sake of argument in his response to Price and then abandoned but forms the background of his writing about time in the *Examination*. This insight can help us dissolve the tension between the eternalist and growing block interpretations of Broad's Phase 3. The eternalist interpretation of the *Examination* applies to the second time series in which all events exist, all are equally real, and can stand as contents of precognitions. When Broad talks about events being "wholly in the future" before "slipping into the immediate past" (see section 2), he is referring to the second time series. The growing block interpretation applies to the first time series in which things, as Broad says, "come to pass" (*Examination*, 280–81). This can mean one of two things: either 'absolute becoming' refers to the coming of *things or events* into being as it did in Phase 2. Or, alternatively, it can just mean the coming into being of *cognitions* whose contents are the eternally-existing events in the second series, a suggestion considered by Price ("Implications of Precognition," 227). Broad's definition of absolute becoming from above seems ambiguous between these.

Where does this leave the presentist interpretation? My claim is that the presentist reading is not an accurate reading of the *Examination*. First, it is worth noting that Thomas and Mundle, both of whom suggest the presentist interpretation, appeal not to Broad's

*Examination* but to the "Philosophical Implications of Foreknowledge."[69] If one is to search *outside* the *Examination* to know what happens *in* it, then the discussion with Price, where Broad explicitly comments on the *Examination* is a more reliable place to look. And in the discussion, Broad affirms a hypertime theory inconsistently blending both the growing block theory and eternalism. Secondly, the "Philosophical Implications of Foreknowledge" seems to be the only place where Broad affirms something that looks like a presentist view, a view that, it should be said, would have been exceedingly rare amongst early 20th-century philosophers.[70] And as we saw in the previous section, later in the paper Broad suggests that Dunne's theory might be able to provide a *prehensive* (that is, direct and not image-mediated) account of cognition of future and past events in the second time-series ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 200). This account would require eternalism. Thirdly, Broad's primary strategy in responding to the epistemic objection is to appeal to a *symmetry* between past and future, or between memory and precognition. Broad simply accepts the way the objection is formulated by the presentist and then shows that it fails on the objector's own terms. This is also supported by Oaklander's insistence that the main target of Broad's response is the objector's view of *memory*, not their presentism.[71] Or in other words, if there is no incoherence in believing that we remember the past, then there should not be one in believing that we precognise the future. But this objection and its refutation could work equally well (or even better as Oaklander suggests[72]) if we assume eternalism since eternalism is as symmetrical a view about the past and the future as presentism is.

In short, I propose that the presentist reading of the *Examination* is inaccurate and that hypertime can explain why some read the *Examination* as defending eternalism, whilst others as defending the growing block theory. But this is just a first step. The hypertemporalist reading can perhaps remove the inconsistency between the different *interpretations* of the *Examination*. But can it remove the inconsistency within the hypertime theory itself?

Resolving this problem goes beyond the history of philosophy, particularly since Broad himself confessed to Price that he did not know how to fix it. I merely offer two suggestions here. One way out would simply be to accept Price's suggestion that events can have different types of reality. This would not be without precedent. For example, Dorato argues that Gödel distinguished between "reality" and "existence," so that while all events were real, the real "comes into existence in time," thus suggesting that for Gödel there was not a single sense of reality/existence when it comes to temporal ontology.[73] Something similar may be adopted in trying to make the theory of time in the *Examination* coherent.

Another possible way out would be to develop a suggestion from contemporary discussions regarding hypertime. In a recent paper, Baron and Lin claim that the usual problems associated with hypertime (including the infinite regress to higher dimensions) can be alleviated if we give up the assumption that hypertime "must share a common metaphysical nature with time."[74] They argue that once this assumption is ditched, a coherent hypertime theory consisting of A-theoretical time in series 1 and B-theoretical hypertime in series 2 can be defended. Structurally, the theory they thereby develop is nearly identical to the one we find in Broad's discussion with Price. And the problems they try to resolve using it are nearly identical to those in Dunne. Their main interest in developing this novel hypertime is to resolve inconsistencies regarding time's *passage*. But their account might pave the way for developing an account of time's *ontology* that could deal with the problem of partial becoming that troubles Broad and Price.

On the stronger hypertemporalist interpretation of the *Examination*, Broad's declared avoidance of hypertime (ostensibly incompatible with what we find in his discussion with Price) is avoidance in writing only, not in spirit. There are two reasons why Broad might have wanted to keep his fondness for hypertime quiet. The first is, as we have seen, that a hypertime theory was at that time clearly considered "very wild" ("Implications of

Precognition," 233), "nonsensical" ("Implications of Precognition," 240) or "perfectly fantastic" ("Implications of Foreknowledge," 203). The second reason, connected to the first, is that multi-dimensional time was so strongly associated with Dunne, who was widely discredited by professional philosophers at the time. Apart from a few figures mostly on the margins of academic philosophy, most philosophers were extremely critical of Dunne's *Experiment*.[75] Its reviews targeted the rather obscure relation between the human brain and the temporal series[76] and Ernest Nagel said that "this is a book very difficult to take seriously."[77] Antony Flew later called serialism "preposterous" and a "logical extravaganza."[78] In short, Dunne was not a thinker one would want to associate with. Assuming that Dunne motivated Broad to re-consider a version of hypertime, one might understand Dunne's role in the *Examination* in the same way that, as Peter West and I have recently argued, one should understand the role of Bergson in Eddington's *Nature of the Physical World*.[79] Eddington was a Bergsonian without having many kind things to say about Bergson in the same way that, on the stronger reading, Phase-3 Broad was a hypertemporalist without having many kind things to say about Dunne.

## 8. Conclusion

This paper has argued that Broad's engagement with paranormal cognition of the future is crucial for understanding the inconsistency in his theory of time in the *Examination.* I have tried to show that Broad's interest in precognitions was motivated by Dunne's *An Experiment With Time* and shaped his third account of time. I have also suggested that Dunne's serialism motivated Broad's interest in hypertime which can, in turn, partially attenuate the inconsistent ontological claims about time in the *Examination*.

There are two important upshots of this paper, each with its own particular audience.

The first audience are historians of analytic philosophy. Broad's engagement with psychic research went far deeper than most people realise. The Broad papers at Trinity include a large portfolio (BROD II, 4) containing instructions for performing what seem to be occult rituals and kabbalistic drawings of the sefirot. Broad's dream books contain astrological symbols on the front covers (BROD D/1/10) and Broad made innumerable horoscopes for his friends (BROD F/3). The books he lent his friends and colleagues (BROD/F/4) also include Ruppelt's *Report on Unidentified Flying Objects.* Broad later became interested in poltergeists, telekinesis, telepathy, trance-mediumship, out-of-body experiences, and survival after death.[80] What is particularly interesting here is that analytic philosophy in the first half of the 20th century was intent on excluding "unscientific" phenomena from legitimate philosophical enquiry: be this miracles, the existence of the soul, or other topics deemed too religious or too metaphysical.[81] And yet Broad, one of the towering figures of this tradition, was trying to apply rigorous methods of analysis to arguably pretty spooky questions.[82]

The second group of scholars who should pay more attention to Broad's psychic research are contemporary metaphysicians. Broad thought that the *possibility* of psychic phenomena (regardless of whether they were real or not) raised interesting philosophical questions, such as those that Dunne asked regarding attempts to prevent a foreseen event. These questions are interesting regardless of whether you believe in precognitions or not: just as questions about time travel are interesting regardless of whether you believe that it is practically possible. Besides, questions structurally very similar to those that Dunne and Broad both asked regarding the problems generated by our possible knowledge of the future are seen as perfectly legitimate in the philosophy of religion, as attested by the mountains of material written on prophecy and divine foreknowledge.[83]

More generally, philosophers should pay more attention to John William Dunne and to his role in 20th-century philosophy. His philosophy is one of the first to postulate higher time dimensions and hyper-time is one of the central topics of contemporary discussions in the philosophy of time.[84] Similarly, the moving spotlight theory, of which Dunne's serialism is an extreme version, seems to be making a comeback on the stage of contemporary philosophy of time.[85] The "logical extravaganza"[86]—as Flew epitheted Dunne's serialism—is perhaps less extravagant than it initially seems.[87]

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[1] Thomas, "Roots."

[2] Gustavsson, "Charlie Dunbar Broad"; Oaklander, *C. D. Broad's Philosophy of Time*.

[3] Walmsley, *C.D. Broad*, 307.

[4] A recent exception to this is Arthur, *Reality of Time Flow*, 47–49, 59.

[5] Stewart, "J. W. Dunne and Literary Culture"; O'Connell, "How to Handle Eternity."

[6] See Baron and Lin, "Time, and Time Again."

[7] See Thomas "Roots"; Mundle, "Broad's Views"; Oaklander, *C. D. Broad's Philosophy of Time*; Gustavsson, "Charlie Dunbar Broad."

[8] Mundle, "Broad's Views," 355.

[9] Mundle, "Broad's Views," 359; Galavotti and Ramsey, "Ramsey's 'Note on Time,'" 161; Oaklander, *C. D. Broad's Philosophy of Time*, 69.

[10] Mundle, "Broad's Views," 357, 359.

[11] Oaklander, *C. D. Broad's Philosophy of Time*, 59.

[12] Throughout the paper I use "Examination" to refer only to the second volume of *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy*.

[13] Thomas, "Roots," 543.

[14] Mundle, "Broad's Views," 366; Williams, "Sea Fight Tomorrow," 151.

[15] Mundle, "Broad's Views," 368.

[16] Oaklander, *C. D. Broad's Philosophy of Time*, 116; Thomas, "Roots," 544; Savitt, "On Absolute Becoming"; Mundle, "Broad's Views," 368.

[17] Mundle, "Broad's Views," 368; see also Savitt, "On Absolute Becoming," 161.

[18] Oaklander, *C. D. Broad's Philosophy of Time*, 88.

[19] Thomas, "Roots," 543–44.

[20] Mundle, "Broad's Views," 166.

[21] For a discussion, see Mundle, "Broad's Views," 366–67; Thomas, "Roots," 543 and Oaklander, *C. D. Broad's Philosophy of Time*, 86.

[22] Williams, "Sea Fight Tomorrow," 153.

[23] Williams, "Sea Fight Tomorrow," 151.

[24] Ducasse, "Broad on the Relevance," 375.

[25] Walmsley, *C.D. Broad*, 307–8.

[26] See Broad, "Normal Cognition"; "Dreaming and Some of Its Implications"; "Neglected Method."

[27] Broad, "Relevance of Psychical Research"; "Psychic Forces."

[28] In the rest of this text, I will be referring to four sources of archival material with the following classmarks in brackets: (1) "Papers of C. D. Broad, Part I" (BROD), (2) "Papers of C. D. Broad, Part II" (BROD II) and (3) Broad's own copies of Dunne's *An Experiment With Time* (33.c.93.3), *The Serial Universe* (33.c.93.2), and *The New Immortality* (LL 995 D 107), all at Trinity College, Cambridge; as well as (4) correspondence with F. H. Saltmarsh stored at the Cambridge University Library (UL SPR MS 51/2).

[29] Walmsley, *C.D. Broad*, xii.

[30] Walmsley, *C.D. Broad*, 308.

[31] Flew, "Broad and Supernormal Precognition," 415.

[32] See Broad, "Normal Cognition," 27.

[33] See Broad, "Implications of Foreknowledge," 177.

[34] Throughout the text I will be referring to three different editions of the book: the first from 1927 (referenced as "*Experiment* 1927"), the second from 1929 (referenced as "*Experiment* 1929"), and the copy with C. D. Broad's marginal notes from Trinity College (referenced as "33.c.93.3"), which was the third edition from 1934. For more information on Dunne's biography, see Galavotti and Ramsey, "Ramsey's 'Note on Time,'" 158; Stewart, "J. W. Dunne and Literary Culture," 63–64.

[35] See Inchbald, "The Last Serialist"; Stewart, "J. W. Dunne and Literary Culture," 63, 73–79; White, *Other Worlds*, 178, 180—84, 186–91; O'Connell, "How to Handle Eternity."

[36] Dunne's literary influence is mapped by the "Dreaming the Future" project headed by kitt price at Queen Mary, University of London, UK. For more details of this project, see https://dunnefuture.wordpress.com/about/. Guy Inchbald, an independent scholar, has accumulated an invaluable amount of information about Dunne available here: http://www.steelpillow.com/dunne/index.html.

[37] The extension of serialism to the whole universe was suggested in a pair of articles published in *The Listener* as Dunne, "Serialism. Part I," and Dunne, "Serialism. Part II." *The Listener* also published Broad's "Philosophy and Psychical Research" four years later.

[38] Stewart, "J. W. Dunne and Literary Culture," 65.

[39] White, *Other Worlds*, 175.

[40] Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will."

[41] Galavotti and Ramsey, "Ramsey's 'Note on Time,'" 160.

[42] See for example Gunn, "An Experiment With Time" 73.

[43] Gunn, "An Experiment With Time" 72; Gunn, "Problem of Time," 185, Broad, "Mr. Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time,'" 168.

[44] Some of the correspondence can also be found in BROD II, 4.

[45] See S. G. Soal, "Review," 123; Stewart, "J. W. Dunne and Literary Culture," 64; White, *Other Worlds*, 193.

[46] Galavotti and Ramsey, "Ramsey's 'Note on Time,'" 159.

[47] These experiments are mentioned in *Experiment* 1927, 53.

[48] Besterman, "Report."

[49] See Broad's "Mr. Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time'"; "Ostensibly Precognitive Dream"; "Implications of Foreknowledge"; and "Normal Cognition."

[50] Dobbs and Broad, "The Relation between the Time of Psychology and the Time of Physics." See also notes and correspondence on this in BROD/C/1/80.

[51] Dating this diary is difficult, but the reverse side contains what appear to be Broad's records (accounts?) with the date 1937. The dating prior to 1938 is likely, since the mention of Dunne is on the same line as *The Adventure*, which Broad addresses, among other places, in his presidential address to the *Society* in 1935 ("Normal Cognition," 29). "The Adventure" refers to Moberly and Jourdain, *An Adventure,* a book giving an account of what Broad uses as an example of supernormal cognition of past events—as opposed to the supernormal cognition of future events in Dunne ("Normal Cognition," 29).

[52] According to the Trinity College library records (Add.MS.a.151A, 54), Broad owned a copy of Hinton's *Fourth Dimension* that he donated to the Trinity College Library.

[53] Broad uses a much more complicated example of a corrugated sheet with a plane moving across it.

[54] Quote based on Broad, "Mr Dunne's Theory of Time in 'An Experiment With Time,'" 177.

[55] See Ducasse, "Broad on the Relevance," 381.

[56] See also the marginal notes in Broad's own copy of *The Serial Universe* (33.c.93.c, 75–80), where he specifically connects the regress in Dunne with the one in McTaggart.

[57] This was published later as Broad, "Normal Cognition."

[58] For a discussion, see Flew, "Broad and Supernormal Precognition," 417.

[59] Flew, "Broad and Supernormal Precognition," 418.

[60] See Broad, "Implications of Foreknowledge," 198.

[61] See Gunn, "An Experiment With Time," 75; Galavotti and Ramsey, "Ramsey's 'Note on Time,'" 160; Stewart, "J. W. Dunne and Literary Culture," 66.

[62] See for example Deng, "What Is Temporal Ontology?"

[63] Mundle, "Broad's Views," 368.

[64] See also Kneale, "Review," 508.

[65] See also Geach, *Truth, Love and Immortality*, 93.

[66] See also Dobbs and Broad, "The Relation between the Time of Psychology and the Time of Physics."

[67] It is referenced in Ducasse, "Broad on the Relevance," 386–87.

[68] The paper is not accessible via the digitised archive of the *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volumes* at the time of writing. The copy referenced in this paper is stored at Trinity College (Adv.c.27.39[4]), belonged to Broad, and is the only one I was able to locate.

[69] Thomas, "Roots," 543–44; Mundle, "Broad's Views," 366. Oaklander seems to be the only commentator considering the presentist reading without basing it on the foreknowledge paper. However, Oaklander's presentist reading (which he ultimately rejects anyway) is primarily based on a contrast between the full-future eternalist view and absolute becoming, which he identifies with the *tensed* view of time and with presentness being successively held by events. But the latter can also be identified with the growing-block ontology. In his discussion of Broad's views about the annihilation and generation of events, for example, Oaklander says that Broad's "account of generation and annihilation either assumes some *tensed* version of the A-theory (which seems likely) or is ontologically neutral and just expressing what we ordinarily believe" (Oaklander, *C. D. Broad's Philosophy of Time*, 101). If the first of these options (*tensed* version of the A-theory) is true, then most of what Oaklander says is perfectly compatible with the growing-block reading, which, after all, is a version of the A-theory. Oaklander also discusses Broad's foreknowledge paper independently and argues that his response actually works even *better* if it targets and rejects the objector's presentism instead of assuming it (Oaklander, *C. D. Broad's Philosophy of Time*, 101).

[70] R. G. Collingwood seems to be the one exception to this. I am grateful to Emily Thomas for raising this point. For a discussion, see Thomas, "Hilda Oakeley," 950–51.

[71] Oaklander, *C. D. Broad's Philosophy of Time*, 168.

[72] Oaklander, *C. D. Broad's Philosophy of Time*, 165.

[73] Dorato, *Time and Reality,* 118–119.

[74] Baron and Lin, "Time and Time Again," 259.

[75] The second (1929) edition of *An Experiment With Time* quotes positive reviews by J. L. Stocks and F. C. S. Schiller and was published with an approving note from Arthur Eddington. The third edition from 1934 contains an approving note from Eddington in the Appendix. Some have accepted the notion of the infinite regress and the ultimate observer (for example, H. T. C., "Review") or praised Dunne for the methods he develops in testing the genuineness of precognitive dreams (Levy, "Review"). Lafleur points out that the problems that Dunne's philosophy presents are problems for *anyone* trying to postulate additional dimensions of time (Lafleur, "Time as Fourth Dimension"). F. M. Cleugh considered Dunne to be one of the five most important figures in the history of the philosophy of time (alongside Kant, Bergson, Alexander, and McTaggart), but ultimately concluded that his account was fallacious (Cleugh, *Time and Its Importance*). A recently uncovered note by Ramsey seems to suggest that he considered there to be three main responses to the problem of temporal determinations: McTaggart's, Broad's, and Dunne's (Galavotti and Ramsey, "Ramsey's 'Note on Time'").

[76] Soal, "Review"

[77] Nagel, "Review"

[78] Flew, "Sources," 83, 86; Flew, "Broad and Supernormal Precognition," 418.

[79] Moravec and West, "Eddington and Stebbing."

[80] See Broad, "Poltergeists"; "Ostensibly Paranormal Physical Phenomena"; "Normal Cognition," 46–67; *Lectures*, 153–89, 253–383, 387–430.

[81] See for example Flew, MacIntyre, and Daly, *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*.

[82] Thanks to Peter West for this observation.

[83] For just a few examples addressing questions nearly identical to those raised by Dunne, see Rota, "The Eternity Solution"; Oppy and Saward, "Molinism and Divine Prophecy."

[84] See for example Mazzola, "Does Time Flow"; Smith, "Why Time Travellers"; Baron and Lin, "Time, and Time Again."

[85] See for example Cameron, *Moving Spotlight*.

[86] Flew, "Broad and Supernormal Precognition," 418; "Sources," 86.

[87] I am grateful to the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, the Governors of Dulwich College, and the Syndics of Cambridge University Library for allowing me to access, consult, and reference archival materials cited in this paper. I am particularly indebted to all the staff at the Wren Library, Trinity College, Cambridge—Adam C. Green in particular—for their help in finding these materials. This paper could never have been written without information and work on Dunne shared with me in correspondence by Guy Inchbald and kitt price. Some sections of this paper were presented at the History of Philosophy Group meeting (University of St Andrews, 29th November 2022), the Winter Reflectorium (University of St Andrews, 13th January 2023), the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion (Cambridge, 28th February 2023), and the British Society for the History of Philosophy Annual Conference (University of Aberdeen, 15th April 2023). I am thankful to the participants at these events for their questions and suggestions. My final thanks go to Emily Thomas, Peter West, and the peer-reviewers at JHP for their invaluable feedback on earlier versions of this paper.