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Symons and Print Culture: Journalist, Critic, Book Maker

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My intent here is to explore the range and ingenuity of Arthur Symons's participation in print culture, and to probe how he managed his bread and butter work as a journalist, critic, and book maker. My focus is his article 'The Painting of the Nineteenth Century', in its differing functions and forms over a four-year period (1903-1906), as a periodical book review and a chapter on painting that appeared in *Studies in Seven Arts*, a book comprised of articles from the press.¹ What initially drew me to this article was its evidence of Symons's sustained support for Simeon Solomon, a queer British artist from a London-based family of Jewish painters, in the decade that followed the Wilde trials, and among the inhibitions they fostered.² Nearly a generation younger than Solomon, Symons (1865-1945) was born just as Solomon (1840-1905) began his career. Solomon appears in both the 1903 and 1906 versions of Symons's review, and in between a newspaper review of an exhibition of Solomon's work in 1905/1906. Symons enters late into Solomon's story in these pieces, towards the end of the artist's life.

In the mid-1860s Solomon was taken up by Oxford aesthetes including A. C. Swinburne and Walter Pater, who in 1873 helped Solomon deal with a charge of sexual impropriety.³ Before Solomon's brief imprisonment that year, the first of many for public homosexual practices, drunkenness, and homelessness, his early work met with increasing respect in the art world. Religious, visionary, symbolic, and characterized by homosexual imagery and themes, his visual art and his prose poem *A Vision of Love* retained admirers in the course of his inchoate lifestyle that led to destitution, and death in a workhouse in 1905. Thus, Symons's interventions in these articles occur at an extreme period of Solomon's life and isolation, and then after the artist's death.

Symons links the various iterations of his text with the work of Pater, a valued friend of Symons, whose death Symons had lamented in a long tribute in 1896.⁴ That obituary, published when the Wilde trials were still fresh in living memory, indicates Symons's refusal to be governed

by the fear and prohibitions that followed Wilde's imprisonment. Like Symons, Pater had been a lifelong supporter of Solomon and collector of his works, and Symons reveals in these articles the networks, private and professional, that Symons, Solomon, and Pater shared. If the brave tributes by Symons to Solomon and Pater are noteworthy in 1903-1906, they are characteristic of Symons's past record, while his imaginative focus in his book on the larger picture of Europe is also a continuation of transnational work on Decadence and Symbolism he published in 1893 and 1898.⁵ Distinguished by its breadth and acuity of cultural reading, *Studies in Seven Arts* includes chapters on innovative and largely contemporary forms of nineteenth-century sculpture, painting, symphonic music, opera, acting, theatre design, and drama, respectively by Rodin, Beethoven, Wagner, Richard Strauss, the actress Eleonora Duse, Gordon Craig, and Alfred Jarry's 'Ubu Roi'. Part of its distinctive portrait of what is retrospectively called Modernism is its turn from the default perspective of literature, a single art, to the variety and range of other arts, which he groups together as characteristic of a modern movement.

'The Painting of the Nineteenth Century': Symons, Simeon Solomon, and Walter Pater at the *Fin de Siècle*

Even in its book form in 1906, 'The Painting of the Nineteenth Century' clearly acknowledges its origins as a 1903 review article (in the *Fortnightly Review*), and its function as a response to a specific book at its time of publication, D. S. MacColl's *Nineteenth-Century Art* (1902). Although Symons's article has been revised for his book, he neither seeks to obscure the origins of his chapters as journalism, or to suppress their gestation over time in the press, but supplies dates at the end of chapters, here 1903 and 1905, showing that each 1906 piece is part of *a process* of creativity, and a particular response in time, as journalism is. Symons's persistence in naming MacColl and his book, and refusing to disguise the review genre of the piece in its altered book form, is one of Symons's distinctions as a critic. He does however remove several informative sentences from the 1903 text to take account of changes in MacColl's circumstances, notably his promotion from 1906 to Director of the Tate Gallery. But in both texts it is as painter-critic that Symons most values

MacColl, whose watercolours Symons had already reviewed in the *Saturday Review* in the mid-1890s, and whose paintings Symons preferred to his prose!⁶

Symons's review of MacColl's book is generous, in a Paterian mode of appreciation. Despite this positive note, Symons shows his mettle as a critic by an oblique critique, a quiet identification of an omission. Symons extends his appreciation to the paintings of Solomon, whom MacColl's book excludes. Symons's agency is heightened by the review function. The significance of Symons's introduction of Solomon is also revealed by the cultural climate of the time: the status of Solomon in 1903, who was in the throes of alcoholism and destitution before dying in 1905 in the workhouse. If MacColl's omission may be seen as part of a general critical reluctance to mention him, Symons's response to the same climate was to include him.

The absence of Solomon from MacColl's book may be compared with a biography of Walter Pater by A. C. Benson, published in 1906, the same year as Symons's book. Benson does not mention Simeon Solomon at all, although Pater and Solomon were close friends in the 1860s and early 1870s, and in contact until Pater's death. Other close friends of Pater's, Symons himself, and Lionel Johnson, appear only once in Benson, among a terse list of Pater's 'decadent' friends whom Benson thought better otherwise to exclude. Such was the climate for biographers and memoirists a decade after the Wilde trials, when the power of the law that made male homosexual practices a crime and incarcerated Wilde, inhibited print, shaped social practices, and ensured censorship in biography. In 1906, in their respective books, Symons's and Benson's inscription of the surrounding gender issues is comparable, though they handle it in characteristically different ways: Benson, born into the higher echelons of the Anglican Church and writing from the University, excludes Solomon and other risqué figures and implies rather than states the topic of queer Pater; while Symons, known for his risqué writing that some regarded as his self-appointed brand, names Solomon and Pater, and attends at length and regularly to their work.

In his tribute to Solomon, Symons inscribes links between himself, Pater and Solomon. Echoing Pater at many points, Symons's 1903 review becomes in places a prose poem recognizably

related to the style of various passages in Pater's writing. Nevertheless, its detailed attention to Solomon distinguishes the piece, as does its slightly tongue-in-cheek tribute to Pater. This Paterian note in both the 1903 review and the 1906 chapter is re-enforced in 1906 by the book in which the chapter appears: its title *Studies in Seven Arts* echoes Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, as do titles of two other books published in 1897 and 1904, a series in which Symons's new book takes its place.⁷ The book opens with quotations from Pater in the first sentence of the first paragraph of the Introduction, followed by Pater-inflected descriptive prose over the five pages devoted to Solomon (pp. 57-61). Solomon's picture 'The Sleepers and the One that Waketh' is evoked for readers through Symons's deployment of Paterian ekphrasis:

Three faces, faint with languor, two with closed eyes and the other with eyes wearily open, lean together, cheek on cheek, between white, sharp-edged stars in a background of dim sky. These faces, with their spectral pallor, the robes of faint purple tinged with violet, are full of morbid delicacy, like the painting of a perfume. Here, as always, there is weakness, insecurity, but also a very personal sense of beauty, which this only half-mastered technique is just able to bring out upon the canvas, in at least a suggestion of everything that the painter meant.⁸

Moving on to later works by Solomon, Symons suggests that as recently as ten years ago, Solomon 'could still produce, with an almost mechanical ease, sitting at a crowded table in a Clerkenwell news-room, those drawings which we see reproduced by some cheap process of facsimile, in pink or in black, and sold in the picture-shops in Regent Street, Oxford Street, and Museum Street.'⁹ He continues with another Pater-inspired paragraph, echoing rhythms and diction of Pater's pieces on 'Diaphaneitè', Winckelmann, Leonardo, Botticelli, and Giorgione:

A void and wonderfully vague desire fills all these hollow faces, as water fills the hollow pools of the sand; they have the sorrow of those who have no cause for sorrow except that they are as they are in a world not made after their pattern. The lips are sucked back and the chin thrust forward in a languor which becomes a mannerism, like the long thin throats, and heavy half-closed eyes and cheeks haggard with fever or exhaustion. The same face, varied a little in mood, scarcely in feature, serves for Christ and the two Marys, for Sleep and for Lust. The lips are scarcely roughened to indicate a man, the throats scarcely roughened to indicate a woman. These faces are without sex; they have brooded among ghosts of passions till they have become the ghosts of themselves; the energy of virtue or of sin has gone out of them, and they hang in space, dry, rattling, the husks of desire.¹⁰

These instances of heteroglossia confirm the covert personal and professional links between Symons, Solomon, MacColl, and Pater inscribed in this piece.¹¹

Such networks are endemic in nineteenth-century journalism, which generated a special vocabulary to describe the forms these relations took in print: ‘log rolling’ and puffing. Journalists mounted several attacks against these practices across the century; and they exploited, then revised, a system of reviewing and anonymity or pseudonymity that enabled them.¹² This brings me to my first general point, that Arthur Symons was an indefatigable *journalist*, as well as a critic, poet, and author of books. Although the model of bibliography privileges his books and edited books (a traditional hierarchy) followed by the list of a huge number of articles, from the early 1880s Symons is publishing in serials, from the initial *Wesleyan-Methodist* to the *Academy*, *Athenaum*, *London Quarterly Review*, and *Saturday Review* that rapidly supersede it.¹³ By 1893, when ‘The Decadent Movement in Literature’ appears in the monthly *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, helping to establish his reputation as a critic, followed by *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, he is publishing articles weekly, and often more than one per week. While biographies of Symons refer to his serial work in general as part of his busy life, they seldom if ever confront the elephant in the room, that his journalism is at the core of his writing life, and of his writing.¹⁴

His publishing practices are characteristic of journalism at the end of the century. Following an appearance in a newspaper or journal, text or portions of it are reprinted, revised and repurposed in another article or chapter, which may re-appear in later and different gatherings of periodicals and books. By the early nineteenth century, newspaper journalism was characterized by just such practices: by scissors-and-paste sourcing of editorial copy – in book parlance ‘reprinting’ – but with little or no pejorative baggage; this was not piracy, but normalized communication of news, normally from the ‘metropolitan’ and ‘foreign’ press.¹⁵ Symons’s manipulation of his writing, which he might have seen in Pater, is also normative practice for him, and much energy must have gone into his endless repurposing of his press pieces. It probably

depended on his keeping a full ‘morgue’ or cuttings collection, well catalogued and organized to allow him easy access to his incessant scissors-and-paste practices.

Aspects of Symons’s writing pitch and style also derive from journalism: what literary critics call his taste for the ‘avant-garde’ can also be understood as a journalist’s quest for ‘the story’ – his critical nose for ‘news’ and what is new in the contemporary art and literary worlds. His racy style conveys temporalities – the precise moment, along with its broader context, fulfils the journalists’ mantra to keep the reader on board, not only to finish reading the piece, and perhaps purchase the book, find it in a library or go to the performance or exhibition, but to purchase the journal next week. These journalistic aspects of Symons’s prose, all of which originated in the press, should take their place beside the emphasis on his literary and attachments and affinities (with Pater for example), that literary critics and biographers favour. Symons’s article ‘Painting in the Nineteenth Century’ exemplifies many of these characteristics; it begins life as a book review article in a monthly periodical (the *Fortnightly Review*), it is influenced by a weekly newspaper review (the *Outlook*) of an art exhibition, and it re-appears in a revised form in a book of other press pieces, among which some of its content is incorporated.

It also puffs the book and D. S. MacColl (1869-1948), as author, critic, and painter, another journalistic practice.¹⁶ The review is a kindness from one critic to another, as well as the acquisition of some cultural capital – MacColl’s pleasure, the affiliation of Symons’s name with MacColl and his progressive art politics, and the visibility of a major signed article by Symons in the *Fortnightly*. MacColl was one of Symons’s professional peers in the art world, an ascendant art critic of his generation at the *Spectator* (1890-1896) and the *Saturday Review* (1897-1906); and editor of the *Architectural Review* (1901-1905), while Symons was at the *Star* as theatre critic, at the *Outlook* as art critic, and a contributor to *Browning Society Papers*, *Time*, and the *Athenæum*. Both MacColl and Symons are invested in the idea of ‘the contemporary’, including for example Impressionism, although Symons’s posture is different from and wider than MacColl’s’: Symons’s art is poetry, his criticism includes literature and drama, and he is distinguished by his familiarity with French

literature and culture, whereas MacColl's implication in the art world – as head of the Tate from 1906 and from 1911 of the Wallace collection – was mainly in the context of art collections in Britain. As young critics of a new generation, they also share a taste for controversy: MacColl was prominent in the debate about the New Art Criticism between February and April 1893 in the *Spectator* and *Westminster Gazette*,¹⁷ and in 1903 he spearheaded a long-running story about the fulfilment of the Chantrey Bequest at the Royal Academy in the *Saturday Review*.¹⁸ When in 1901 MacColl curated his portion of the Glasgow International Exhibition of Nineteenth-Century Art, on British Impressionism, he did boldly include Solomon's work, but he did not mention him in the book based on that exhibition that Symons reviewed. For his part, Symons's pieces on the MacColl book show a similar taste for the provocative.

Symons's review, despite MacColl's omission of Solomon, includes Solomon, a name and a move meaningful to some of Symons's *Fortnightly Review* readers in 1903, and by more readers in 1906, by which date two posthumous shows that included Solomon had recently been mounted in 1905 and 1906.¹⁹ In addition, the unmistakable echo of Walter Pater's style in both iterations of the article was similarly risqué.²⁰ However, while Symons's racy contemporaneity can be distinguished from Pater's whose work also habitually appeared first in the press, it is similarly distinct from George Moore's raspish and immoderate voice in *Modern Painting*. Symons's prose is more influenced by journalism than Pater's, but less than Moore's in *Modern Painting* (1893), which Symons charges with being 'full of injustice, brutality, and ignorance; but [...] full also of the generous justice, the most discriminating sympathy, and the genuine knowledge of the painter'; 'it stands out among the art criticism of our time'.²¹ But Symons's determination to praise Moore, for all that, is a recognizable variant of Pater's model of aesthetic criticism, 'appreciation', which Symons praises in his Pater piece in *The Savoy* in late 1896: 'Pater [...] may almost be said never, except by implication, to condemn anything. Is it necessary to *say* that one dislikes a thing? It need but be ignored; and Pater ignored whatever did not come up to his very exacting standard, finding quite enough to write about in that small residue that remained over.'²²

That the 1903 periodical article was signed ‘Arthur Symons’ would have also alerted readers to expect a fresh, timely, edgy piece. By this date that signature was familiar to readers of the cultural press; ‘Symons’ was a ‘brand’, and he was publishing across the media, and often. In the early 1890s he was a member of the Rhymers’ Club and his poems had appeared in its two anthologies; in 1892 his second book of poetry *Silhouettes* was dedicated to Yeats, an affiliation he perpetuated by using ‘Silhouette’ as his critical pseudonym in the daily *Star*, where Symons was drama critic. In 1893 this same Symons had published a controversial lengthy overview ‘The Decadent Movement in Literature’ in France and Britain in *Harper’s*, and its successor, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* in 1899, again dedicated to Yeats.

Some readers of the 1903 *Fortnightly Review* article might also recall the *Savoy*, founded and edited by Symons in 1896, illustrated by Beardsley among others, and published by Leonard Smithers, a publisher-bookseller, and a dealer in the literature of decadence and pornography. A niche journal, publishing art and literature only, the *Savoy* presented itself as experimental and ‘alternative’, particularly with reference to *The Yellow Book*. As its self-proclaimed rival, the *Savoy* was also its unmistakable successor, initially imitating *The Yellow Book* in its quarterly frequency, and in its treatment of Art as equal to Literature, with the demarcation and parallel indicated in separate Tables of Contents. But the new journal boasted of being free of editorial ideology – neither ‘decadent’ on the one hand or censorious, in contrast to *The Yellow Book*, which in succumbing to panic during the Wilde trials in the spring of 1895, had dismissed Aubrey Beardsley, its landmark, and lost contributors as a result. Many of them, including Beardsley, re-appeared in the *Savoy*.²³ After two quarterly intervals, Symons’s *Savoy* abandoned its imitation of *The Yellow Book*’s frequency, and went monthly.

Symons’s *Savoy* was an important player in the history of Decadence and the 1890s, publishing as it did excellent work by many renowned writers and artists of the *fin de siècle* and early Modernism, including Max Beerbohm, Mathilde Blind, Joseph Conrad, Hubert Crackanthorpe, Ernest Dowson, Havelock Ellis, Ford Madox Hueffer, Fiona Macleod, George Moore, Olivia

Shakespeare, Paul Verlaine, Frederick Wedmore, Theodore Wratislaw, and Yeats. The Literary Contents of the last issue, which included poetry, a critical essay, a travel article, a short story, and a final editorial, were all by Symons, but it reflected the general policy of the *Savoy* that contributors were encouraged to submit copy across genres and not to confine themselves to one form in which they were most proficient or had established themselves. Thus Beardsley not only designed the *Savoy* and published artwork, but also contributed poems and a short story; Beerbohm an article and a caricature; Dowson stories and poems; Selwyn Image poems and criticism; and Yeats fiction and poetry. Those eight issues over one year of the *Savoy* consolidated Symons's position, a young man of thirty, in the history of the nineties, before he published his Symbolism monograph.

The intellectual boldness of the *Savoy* is part of Symons's core practice as an editor and critic, just as much his brand and that of the *Savoy* as Beardsley's black and white designs and writing. It is repeated in his later projects – the adventurous and prescient contents of *Studies of the Seven Arts*, the Decadence and Symbolist Literature projects, and his inclusion of the 'decadent' French poet Verlaine in various pieces – among them the 'Decadent Movement', the *Symbolist Movement*, and the *Savoy*. Symons's inclusion of Pater in the context of Decadence in 1893 was similarly provocative (not least possibly to Pater), as was an article dedicated to Pater in the *Savoy* eighteen months after the Wilde trials. Symons's inclusion of Solomon in a variety of reviews and articles, including 'The Painting of the Nineteenth Century' is part of this larger picture of Symons's nerve and nose.

Networks, print and personal: Symons, MacColl, Pater, and Solomon

Symons's interest in the art of Solomon began early in his career, at the age of twenty-two: Symons wrote to his friend Herbert Horne, editor of the *Century Guild Hobby Horse* inquiring about Solomon's work in September 1887, after he had seen some of Solomon's work in Manchester. As a friend of Horne, the Rhymers and their circle including Lionel Johnson from 1890, Symons would have had exposure to original drawings and paintings by Solomon, as well as the prints with

which Johnson covered his walls in his room in Fitzroy Street. Johnson had been Pater's great undergraduate friend who, leaving Oxford on graduation, moved to London, where Pater's and Johnson's friendship continued. In meeting Johnson, Symons was consolidating his contact with Pater, whom he had met in 1888, after a correspondence of two years.²⁴ By 1893, Symons and Pater were well acquainted and, as noted, Symons included Pater in his long critical article on 'The Decadent Movement' that appeared in the November 'Decadence issue' of *Harper's*. Pater did not only figure in this issue as Symons's subject; they were partners in their public affiliation with Decadence in the American press, as 'Apollo in Picardy', one of Pater's most explicit queer stories appeared in the back of the same issue.

Earlier that year, in June, Pater had been a covert participant in the New Art Criticism debate that broke out in the press between February and April 1893, in which MacColl figured prominently, as one of the three key figures. George Moore weighed in to support him. When Pater decided to review Moore's irascible book *Modern Painting* in the *Daily Chronicle* newspaper, Pater was tacitly supporting MacColl and the New Art Criticism, as well as Moore, and making a visible and signed contribution to this contemporary critical debate.²⁵ By 1893 Pater had known MacColl over a decade, having met and entertained him when MacColl was an Oxford undergraduate in 1882 and co-editor of the *Oxford Magazine*, to which Pater agreed to contribute. At the end of the year of the New Art Criticism debate, in autumn 1893, MacColl had Pater in mind: he brought together Pater and William Rothenstein, a young artist, in connection with Rothenstein's first book project, *Oxford Characters*, in which Pater was to appear. Pater died unexpectedly and prematurely soon after he sat for Rothenstein, and before the serial part including him and his fellow 'character' was published in April 1895, but MacColl figured in these last years of Pater's life.

Symons invoked these New Art Criticism connections in 1903 in his periodical review of MacColl's book, when he acknowledged George Moore's book, along with John Ruskin's and Pater's as predecessors of MacColl's book, which Symons hailed rhetorically and immediately as

‘the most important book on painting which has been published since Ruskin’s *Modern Painting*.’²⁶ This accolade is introduced by Symons alongside significantly more tempered criticism of Ruskin, and even of Pater, about whom Symons writes ‘Had he [Pater] devoted himself exclusively to art criticism, there is no doubt that, *in a sense*, he would have been a great art critic.’²⁷ Symons is playing to his readers, spicing up his introduction to his article with hyperbole on the one hand and a touch of mild denigration on the other.

We see Symons similarly accommodating critique to a larger model of praise in a 1906 review in the *Outlook* in January 1906 of the Royal Academy’s winter exhibition, where Symons links the work of Solomon with that of Burne-Jones and D. G. Rossetti. Symons dismisses a show dedicated to Solomon’s work at the Baillie Gallery as too mixed in quality, to which he contrasts the Royal Academy show, of fewer pieces of higher quality:

at the separate exhibition at the Baillie Gallery there was, along with a few good things, and many things interesting as steps in a progress, such a multitude of things at once violent and inane, at once helpless, and struggling, that it was impossible to think seriously of what seemed to be the attempts of a bad poet to express himself in a medium which he had not mastered. But at the Academy we see what Solomon, at the beginning of his career, could do.²⁸

Nevertheless, in a transitional sentence as he moves from Solomon to Rossetti in this Royal Academy review, Symons is glad to abandon the ‘chilly emblems’ of Solomon’s work for the warmth of Rossetti’s. Symons chose not to review the Baillie Gallery show separately later in the previous year but rather to incorporate this paragraph in a more positive ‘appreciation’, however one not devoid of mild criticism itself.

Likewise, despite the irony with respect to Pater the art critic in the 1903 article and 1906 chapter and book, they both are suffused by Paterian language, and writing. Why are these articles and book so Paterian? Clearly Symons, as Karl Beckson suggests, experienced Pater’s death in July 1894 as a great loss.²⁹ Symons’s immediate attempt to recruit contributors to a volume memorialising Pater ‘came to nothing’ and thwarted his own plan to commemorate Pater, to the extent that Symons does not seem to have even written an obituary in the press in the autumn of

1894 following Pater's death. He does however become a self-styled defender of Pater's reputation, and vociferous in his objection to Edmund Gosse's publication of Pater's journalism from the *Guardian* in 1896, in the wake of the Wilde trials, echoing the views of Pater's posthumous editor Charles Lancelot Shadwell, a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, and Pater's sisters.³⁰ Nevertheless Symons finally published his 1896 tribute to Pater in the *Savoy*.³¹ A decade later in 1906, it is not simply that the first British biography of Walter Pater by A. C. Benson and Symons's *Studies in Seven Arts* both appeared that year.³² In the months before Symons's book was published in November, Symons was reviewing Pater, as part of his work as a journalist. In May, Symons was fashioning a review of Benson's biography of Pater, a work that might have influenced his writing of the Preface of *Studies in Seven Arts* with its many echoes of and quotations from Pater. Moreover, in September that same year, he published a fresh memoir on Pater in the *Monthly Review*, two months before *Studies in Seven Arts* appeared. Penned in July/August, the *Monthly Review* article was loosely linked in the journal to the occasion of Benson's biography by a footnote, following which it was duly placed by Symons in his 'morgue' or system, to be used subsequently for scissors-and-paste re-purposed publication – in 1919 an introduction to an edition of the *Renaissance* – and again in 1932.³³

This focus on a single aspect of Symons's interests – in visual art, on a single instance of Symons's journalism in iterations in the early twentieth century, and on the matrix of professional and personal networks over fifteen years they involve – provides a glimpse of his working practices and writing as a journalist, critic and producer of books. As this article demonstrates, it needs to be populated with his poetry, his drama, and with other types of his journalism.

¹ Arthur Symons's variations on a review of 1903 take the following forms: It first appears as a periodical book review: 'The Painting of the Nineteenth Century', *Fortnightly Review* (March 1903), 520-34. It is a signed review article of D. S. MacColl, *Nineteenth-Century Art* (Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons, 1902), which is a luxurious folio book. The review is then re-mediated as an article into a book of 'studies': 'The Painting of the Nineteenth Century', *Studies in Seven Arts* (London: Constable, [November] 1906), pp. 33-61. At the end of the article in *Studies in Seven Arts*, Symons lists two dates, 1903 and 1905, of articles that have contributed to the 1906 text that appears in his book. It is likely that the 1905 date refers to a review of an art exhibition of 1905 published in a weekly newspaper, the *Outlook* in early 1906. Earlier in 1905 the *Outlook* had doubled its price and

changed its format: as from its 4 March 1905 issue, the first at 6d, it would be not only ‘an organ worthy of the Unionist party and the Imperial cause, but a weekly review of Politics, Letters, Science and Art, without a rival of its kind’ (*Outlook* (25 February 1905), 272). Symons’s piece, ‘English Masters at the Royal Academy’, in which he reviews Simeon Solomon’s pictures among others, was published in the first issue of the *Outlook* in the new year (6 January 1906), 19-20), as a signed review. Symons probably wrote and submitted it in late 1905, and he may have mis-remembered the date of the publication of his review when he submitted his MS for his book on the seven arts later in 1906.

² For more about Simeon Solomon, see Colin Cruise, *Love Revealed. Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Merrell, 2005).

³ In her thesis, “‘He hath mingled with the ungodly’: The Life of Simeon Solomon after 1873, with a Survey of the Extant Works’ (University of York, 2009), Carolyn Conroy recounts that Swinburne travelled to Oxford to confer with Pater and Ingram Bywater about Solomon’s trouble, about which discussion Swinburne wrote to Powell 6 June 1873. Conroy notes from Swinburne’s account that Pater seemed knowledgeable about the type of Solomon’s insanity, and expressed confidence in Solomon’s ‘recovery and rehabilitation’. She comments that Pater calmed Swinburne’s previous ‘angry, anti-Semitic taunts’ which were replaced by empathy with Solomon, and compassion (p. 87). Pater also went to see Rebecca Solomon, who provided him with more information about the events. Pater’s medical knowledge is explicable: he came from a line of surgeons, and his older brother William Thompson Pater was a doctor, who had been working in mental hospitals since 1865. In 1873, William was Assistant Medical Officer at the Hampshire Asylum in Fareham, and by 1875 he was in charge of the County Asylum in Stafford as its Medical Superintendent. Conroy notes (p. 91) that after Solomon was released from prison in late February 1873, he was ‘placed in a private asylum’ (See Robert Ross, *Bibelot* (April 1911), 144), and it is possible Walter Pater conferred with his brother about Solomon’s condition and aftercare, once he had seen Rebecca. In July 1871, prior to Solomon’s arrest, Swinburne had published a review article dedicated to Solomon (‘Simeon Solomon: Notes on his Vision of Love’, *Dark Blue* (July 1871), 568-77). Given his friendship with Solomon, and his acquaintance with Swinburne, Pater probably read it, although it was published anonymously in a little magazine. Swinburne never reprinted it. Pater does refer to Solomon approvingly if obliquely (‘a *Bacchus* by a young Hebrew painter’) after Solomon’s first imprisonment (‘A Study of Dionysus’, *Fortnightly Review* (December 1876), 752-72). Like Swinburne, Pater never reprinted it.

⁴ Arthur Symons, ‘Walter Pater. Some Characteristics’, *Savoy*, 1.8 (December 1896), 33-41.

⁵ Arthur Symons, ‘The Decadent Movement in Literature’, *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* (November 1893), 858-68, and *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (London: W. Heinemann, 1899).

In 1896 a version of the *Harper’s* article was announced as a ‘forthcoming’ publication in an advert for Leonard Smithers’s list of Works by Arthur Symons, editor of the *Savoy* in the last number of the journal; while still called *The Decadent Movement in Literature*, the forthcoming title included only continental authors: Verlaine, the Goncourts, Huysmans, Villiers de l’Isle-Adam, and Maeterlinck. It already excluded the English ‘decadents’ who appeared in the *Harper’s* piece, even though the topic was still focused on Decadence and not Symbolism, the form it would take in its 1899 version *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, published by W. Heinemann rather than Smithers.

⁶ [Arthur Symons], ‘The New English Art Club’, *Saturday Review* (18 April 1896), 394. On MacColl’s prose, see Symons, ‘The Painting of the Nineteenth Century’, p. 22.

⁷ See Symons’s *Studies in Two Literatures* (1897), with its four parts: ‘Studies in Elizabethan Drama’, ‘Studies in Contemporary Literature’, ‘Notes and Impressions: English Literature’, and ‘Notes and Impressions: French Literature’ that was advertised in the last issue of the *Savoy* in December 1896 as one of five titles from Smithers. *Studies in Prose and Verse* had already appeared in 1904. *Studies in Seven Arts* followed in 1906, and *Studies in the Elizabethan Drama* appeared as a separate volume in 1920.

⁸ Arthur Symons, *Studies in Seven Arts* (London: Archibald Constable, 1906), p. 59.

⁹ Symons, *Studies*, p. 60.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

¹¹ Symons’s personal and professional links with George Moore and A. C. Benson also figure in this context of his art and literary criticism.

¹² For Log Rolling, see ‘Puffing. Logrolling’, *DNCJ* (*Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*), ed. by L. Brake and M. Demoor (London and Ghent: British Library and Academia Press, 2009), p. 517.

¹³ See Karl Beckson, Iain Fletcher, L. W. Markert, and John Stokes, *Arthur Symons: A Bibliography* (Greensboro, NC: ELT Press, 1990).

¹⁴ Beckson et al. (1990) attribute fifty-three articles to Symons in 1903, forty-one in 1904, and sixty-four in 1905.

¹⁵ For ‘scissors-and-paste’ journalism, see Stephan Pigeon, ‘Steal it. Change it. Print it. Transatlantic Scissors-and-Paste Journalism in the *Ladies’ Treasury* 1857-1895’, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 22.1 (2017), 24-39, and ‘Scissors and Paste Journalism’, *DNCJ*, p. 561.

¹⁶ Lawrence W. Markert identifies MacColl’s book and Symons’s review of it as formative documents in the consolidation of Symons’s thoughts about art. See Markert’s chapter on ‘Art and Artists’ (pp. 87-125), and especially pp. 103-104 on Symons’s debt to MacColl, in *Critic of the Seven Arts* (Ann Arbor and London: UMI, 1998).

¹⁷ See Kimberley Morse-Jones, ‘The “Philistine” and the New Art Critic: A new perspective on the debate about

Degas's "L'Absinthe" of 1893', *British Art Journal*, 9.2 (September 2008), 50-61, for more about this debate, which was occasioned by the exhibition of Degas' painting in the Grafton Gallery early in 1893. MacColl explained 'the new art criticism' as the application of the same aesthetic critical standards to current art as are applied to ancient art. In this way, MacColl was intent on the recognition of a few contemporary art 'masters' instead of the denunciation of all modern art. George Moore supported the attempts of MacColl and others to turn the tide of conservative criticism with its distaste for all contemporary art.

¹⁸ For debate on the Chantrey Bequest spearheaded by D. S. MacColl, see the to-and-fro articles and letters in the *Saturday Review*, 25 April 1903-August 1904.

¹⁹ The two exhibitions were an exhibition in John Baillie's new gallery devoted to work by Solomon in December 1905 and the Winter exhibition of the Royal Academy exclusively on 'deceased masters of the British School' in early 1906 that included some work by Solomon.

²⁰ This tribute of Symons to Pater itself derives from similarly timely and edgy pieces from the press, published by Symons over a decade between 1896 and 1906.

²¹ Arthur Symons, 'The Painting of the Nineteenth Century', p. 522. Moore was a longstanding friend of Symons: six years earlier Symons dedicated his first book of criticism, *Studies in Two Literatures* (1897) to Moore, in the form of a two-page personal letter (pp. vii-viii).

²² Arthur Symons, 'Walter Pater: Some Characteristics', *Savoy*, 8 (December), 33-50 (p. 38).

²³ For more on the *The Yellow Book* and the *Savoy*, see James G. Nelson, *Publisher to the Decadents* (High Wycombe: Rivendale Press, 2000) and Katherine Mix, *A Study in Yellow. The Yellow Book and its Contributors* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1960).

²⁴ Their friendship proceeded by a recognizable series of stages of puffs: the youthful Symons reviewed *Imaginary Portraits* unsigned in the *Athenaeum* in June 1887 and signed in *Time* in August 1887; Pater obliged three months later, and reviewed Symons's first book on Browning, anonymously in the *Guardian* in November 1887; and Symons in turn dedicated his first volume of poetry to Pater in 1889.

²⁵ The context of Pater's intervention may be part of the explanation of the mystery of why Pater decided to support Moore at this juncture, when Pater had upbraided Moore in a letter a few years earlier. It was a mystery to Moore, who was surprised by the appearance of the review, and its praise. It may be that by throwing his weight behind Moore at this moment, Pater was demonstrating his support as a critic for MacColl and his stance on the New Art Criticism.

Moore's book, *Modern Painting*, was a collection of his pieces from the *Speaker*, a weekly journal in which he regularly published contemporary art criticism as its art critic. The reviews selected show him to be an unmistakable supporter of the New Art Criticism, a critic of the Royal Academy, and sympathetic to MacColl. Firstly, his inclusion of a large number of reviews of contemporary artists affiliated with new and noteworthy contemporary art based in impressionism – Whistler, Manet, Millet, Monet, Pissarro, which has no place in the Royal Academy. Then, secondly, there are admiring pieces on the New English Art Club and the New Art Criticism, and a critical one on 'The Organisation of Art', all in keeping with the New Art Criticism favoured by MacColl. In 'Our Academicians' Moore mentions the neglect by the Royal Academy of the work of Simeon Solomon among others; and in his piece on the New English Art Club, he enters into dialogue throughout the piece with MacColl, whom he describes as 'Mr. MacColl, the art critic of the *Spectator*, our ablest art critic, himself a painter and a painter of talent' (*Modern Painting* (London: Walter Scott Limited, 1893), p. 199).

²⁶ Symons, 'The Painting of the Nineteenth Century', p. 520.

²⁷ Ibid. Although this sentence appears in the *Fortnightly Review*, it is significantly expanded upon in *Studies* (1906), p. 36.

²⁸ Arthur Symons, 'English Masters at the Royal Academy', *Outlook* (6 January 1906), 19-20.

²⁹ Karl Beckson, *Arthur Symons. A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 110.

³⁰ For more about Gosse's controversial publication of a private edition of Pater's *Essays from the Guardian*, see L. Brake, 'On Pater's *Essays from the Guardian*', *ELT*, 56.4 (Spring, 2013), 483-96.

³¹ Arthur Symons, 'Walter Pater: Some Characteristics', *Savoy* (December 1896), 33-41.

³² Reviewing Benson's life of Pater was tricky for Symons, as Benson was, like Pater, a friend, whose work Symons frequently reviewed. Symons's investment in Pater was considerable, and Symons reviewed Benson's book anonymously. In addition to his unsigned review (*Athenaeum*, 2 June 1906, 659-60), Symons had reviewed Benson's *Rossetti*, part of the English Men of Letters series, in the *Speaker* (18 June 1904), Benson's *Poems* in the *Athenaeum* in 1897, other *Poems* in the *Athenaeum* (21 Oct 1893), and perhaps unsigned reviews of other titles.

Symons's admiration for Pater trumped his loyalties to Benson. In his 1906 review, 'Walter Pater, by A. C. Benson', Symons repeatedly tried to find strengths in the book, but it nevertheless 'is not so much a creation as an analytical interpretation'. He persists in this critical mode: 'We miss, it is true, the personal note of one who had really known the man about whom he is writing. Intimate acquaintance certainly counts far more in a biographer than almost the greatest mental sympathy or acuteness. The Pater who is seen in this book is a portrait very closely copied from existing sketches and recollections; it is not, it could not have been a direct and wholly vital portrait from life.' (p. 659).

Symons's significant critique of his friend's biography of Pater is indicative of how seriously Symons took his self-

appointed role as Pater's protector: he even claims 'But, so far as actual detail is concerned, Pater's life was so uneventful that nothing further of any real importance is left for any future biographer.' As the first review to appear in the Literature department of the *Athenaeum* of 2 June, Symons's review was accorded the most prominent position. It faced on the opposite page (658) a long column of ads for Macmillan's new list, of which the third title was Benson's new English Men of Letters, *Pater*. Thus, the prominence of the review functioned at once in the economy of the *Athenaeum* and its advertisers, in the interests of Symons, its contributor, and of Benson, the hapless author of the reviewed title, whose sales might increase, despite the reviewer's reservations.

³³ In December 1896, Symons published 'Walter Pater. Some Characteristics', in the final issue of the *Savoy*, an issue written entirely by himself. He reprints it early in 1897 in the second section of *Studies in Two Literatures* called 'Studies in Contemporary Literature', where Pater appears among a different group of contemporaries: Christina Rossetti, William Morris, Coventry Patmore, and the essays 'Modernity in Verse' and 'A Note on Zola's Method'. In June of the same year, Symons reviews Gosse's privately printed edition of *Essays from the Guardian* in 1897 for the *Athenaeum* (12 June 1897), 769-70, and he reviews it again eight years later in its Macmillan volume format in the *Athenaeum* (2 September 1905), 301. Less than a year later, in June 1906, Symons reviews Benson's biography, *Walter Pater* in Macmillan's English Men of Letters series, in the *Athenaeum*, 2 June, 1906. Four months after that, in September 1906, Symons publishes a personal memoir of Pater, loosely tied to the occasion of the publication of Benson's book in the *Monthly Review*, 72 (September 1906), 14-24. It was six weeks later, in November 1906, when *Studies in Seven Arts* appeared, heavily influenced by Pater – the title; the Preface; the style. Symons persists in his remediation of his Pater pieces: in 1919, he draws on them for his Introduction to an edition of Pater's *Studies in the History of The Renaissance*, published in New York by Boni and Liveright; and in 1932 Symons publishes *A Study of Walter Pater* as a separate volume in London, published by C. J. Sawyer.