Arthur Symons, Critic Among Critic

Symons, Arthur

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About This Bibliography

This bibliography contains annotations of published material about Arthur Symons (1865–1945) and his writings. It focuses on books, parts of books, reviews, essays, articles, and dissertations that contain relevant commentary. Although we have been deliberately selective in choosing items that relate to Symons’s acquaintances, we have included several of these, especially when they include critical estimates of his work. Some items that are brief mentions or passing references to Symons are also included, particularly when the title to a work seems promising. Our intention here is to help researchers see that even though the title may seem to be promising, the content may actually be slight. For example, A. G. Lehmann’s The Symbolist Aesthetic in France, 1885–1895, published in 1950 and 1968, would appear to have potential, but, in fact, includes only one brief mention of Symons (Item 659). Of course, not all brief mentions of Symons are equal. When Pound mentions in passing that “The cult of Poe is an exotic introduced via Mallarmé and Arthur Symons,” that brief mention carries with it a wealth of historical literary perspective (Item 315).

We have not attempted to include material from a wide range of biographical dictionaries, handbooks, and textbooks that are available, but have included some items such as the Dictionary of National Biography and Dictionary of Literary Biography. Web sites related to Symons, which often can be uneven in quality and transient, are not included. Current sites are readily accessible to the researcher via the Internet.

The main body of the bibliography is arranged alphabetically by author with annotations in paraphrase style. Many annotations also include quoted material to supplement the paraphrases. Our commentary is included in brackets within or at the end of an annotation. An exception to this practice is when the annotation is taken from one of the dissertation abstracts indexes. Rather than put the abstract in quotation marks and then alter the internal quotations within quotations, we have placed the abstract in brack-
ets. In these cases the punctuation is as it appears in the original abstract. Another justification for doing this is that many of these abstracts are not paraphrased but are in a commentary style.

The second part of the bibliography is a chronological ordering of the citations in the alphabetic list but without the annotations. This chronological list of works published from the 1880s to 2007 is provided to assist those who wish to trace the evolution of criticism about Symons by year. Items with no date appear at the end of the chronological list. The index follows after the chronological list and includes titles to works, people’s names, and names of periodicals.

The original items in Carol Simpson Stern’s 1974 bibliography published in *English Literature in Transition* (17.2: 77–133), which we have permission to republish, have been updated, mainly in the bracketed commentary, and are identified by “(Stern)” at the end of the annotation. Abstracts of dissertations have been added to her original citations. Her bibliography has been widely cited and has been the largest bibliography of writings about Symons to date. We have added over 1,000 items to that 1974 publication. Some of these additions are unsigned reviews that were left out of the original bibliography unless it was found that they were by a writer who was deemed to be important enough to include such as Pater, Yeats, or Le Gallienne. We now believe that even the unidentified writers helped shape the critical reception of Symons’s work and so feel justified in including them. These unsigned items appear under “U” in the alphabetic listing and are ordered alphabetically by title. Value has also been added to these inclusions because only recently names such as Virginia Woolf and John Middleton Murry have been linked by *Times Literary Supplement Online* to some of these previously unsigned items.

We have used the abbreviation “AS” to refer to Arthur Symons in our annotations, with “AS’s” as the possessive. Writers vary in the way they form the possessive of Symons. When we quote an author we use whatever form is in the original. We also follow this practice with names such as the Savoy and the Yellow Book, which are often cited with “The” in italics, and with the designation “1890s,” which often appears with an apostrophe after the “0” in titles and in text. We have not altered British spelling in our quotations. Other abbreviations used include DA for Dissertation Abstracts and DAI for Dissertation Abstracts International.

Finally, for us “Symbolism,” capitalized, is used to refer to a literary phenomenon that occurred in France, England, and other places during the last half of the nineteenth century; whereas “symbolism,” not capitalized, is used to refer to the broad use of one object to suggest or represent another. Likewise, we use “Decadence,” capitalized, to refer to a literary phenomenon or
movement during the last part of the nineteenth century and “decadence” to refer to a moral or artistic decline. This use of Decadence/decadence we feel is consistent with AS’s own eventual use of these terms, but these terms are not used consistently by writers whose work we have annotated in this bibliography.