Thirty years after my first examination of George Moore and Wagner,¹ the time seems ripe to revisit the topic. The approach is slightly different this time and the focus will be more directly on Moore, in contrast to my earlier study which concentrated on Thomas Mann,² Joyce, T.S. Eliot and D.H. Lawrence, all authors who were considered, in that period, to be more important than Moore. That original study also featured a less-renowned figure who, in my judgment, was utterly central to transmission of Wagnerian tropes and aesthetics in England: Arthur Symons, the friend of George Moore.

The close links between Symons and Moore are evidenced by Moore’s dedication of *Evelyn Innes* to Symons and W.B. Yeats. Moore was Symons’ senior by thirteen years and the influence of the elder writer on the younger is a topic that was not dealt with in my earlier literary exploration but must be addressed now. When assessing Symons, I had associated a number of Symons’ characteristic obsessions with the mentality governing, or at least represented in *The Waste Land*: those were the obsessions that probably contributed to his breakdown in 1908 and underlay his subsequent inability to re-gather in any significant form the “fragments shored against [his] ruins”. No such fate overtook Moore. On the contrary, despite lifelong dabblings in decadence, Moore was never a full-blown poète maudit, as is demonstrated by the hearty

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² What Mann may have read of Moore deserves investigation. It is clear that from early in the 1890s, the young German novelist was aware of the work of near contemporaries in English; and it would seem remarkable that the mature author of *Joseph and His Brothers* would not have known of *The Brook Kerith*. 
temperament he celebrates through his great work – contemporary to Symons’ troubles – *Hail and Farewell*. What both men had in common was that they were famously Francophile and imbibed the holy essence of Wagnerism out of a *symboliste* grail.

It cannot be said for certain that the young T.S. Eliot did, or did not, read the works of George Moore. However, it was *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* by Symons that Eliot discovered at the Grolier bookshop in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1908. Moreover, it was from that book and, famously, from the descriptions in it – of Mallarmé, Verlaine and Jules Laforgue – that Eliot derived the impetus and mental shaping that ultimately resulted in *The Waste Land*. Certainly, for a decade or more following his discovery of the Symbolist Movement, Eliot’s interests both as poet and as critic followed in the wake of Symons’ 1890s trajectory. Incidentally, such subsidy as Eliot received during and after composition of *The Waste Land* came, in the main, from a figure who had also been a friend and patron of Symons: John Quinn, the man who was ultimately presented with the manuscript of that work and was responsible for its forty-year disappearance into the bowels of the New York Public Library.

Links between Symons, Yeats and Moore flow through Quinn. Quinn became familiar with Symons through John Yeats, father of W.B. who was *confrère* and flatmate to Symons at a seminal moment in their poetic careers. The key year was 1896 when Symons was the editor and W.B. Yeats a contributor to the *Savoy*. Moore’s dedication of *Evelyn Innes* to them both might be seen as related to a onetime hope that the novel might be serialized in that journal. The interest of Yeats in Wagner (such as it was) and in French symbolism coincides with this phase of close association with Symons, rather than with his connections with Moore a few years later.

The collaboration between Yeats and Moore on *Diarmuid and Grania* for the Irish Literary Theatre may represent a high watermark in the aspirations of both towards a frankly Wagner-like accomplishment. However, for neither of them was it the most happy or successful endeavour. Arguably, Yeats would achieve his aim with *The Shadowy Waters*, and Moore would do so with *The Lake*. Overt Wagnerian aspirations in the literary theatre received a setback from their activity, as would happen with Symons’ contemporary struggle to produce symbolist plays – including a version of *Tristan and Iseult* – for British audiences. Few similar efforts met with success: amongst