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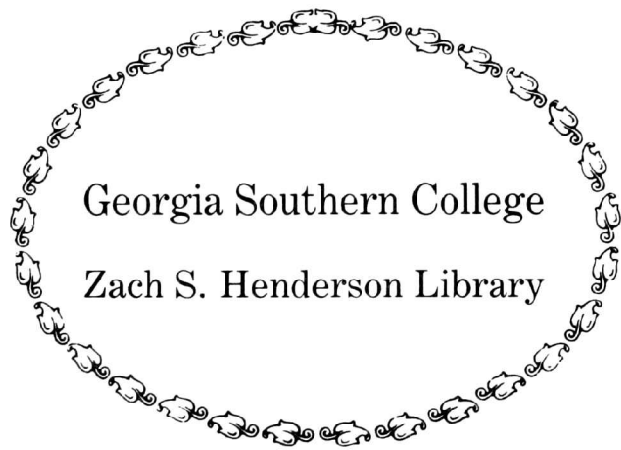
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HENRY JAMES NOVEL

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Hugh Selwyn Mauberley:

Ezra Pound's Condensation of the Henry James Novel

Submitted by

Delores Lamb Belew

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1988

Hugh Selwyn Mauberley:

Ezra Pound's Condensation of the Henry James Novel

by

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Introduction

Ezra Pound believed avidly that experimentation and imitation were the most important activities for the serious artist. Only through experimentation could the serious artist hope to create a style that was uniquely his own; only through the imitation of and improvement on the works of great artists could he create art that was new and alive. By becoming a "voluntary apprentice to dead masters, the young poet learns about subject and technique" (GP 2). Throughout his literary career Pound experimented with various forms in poetry and imitated those artists whom he considered great, both living and dead, to achieve a concise, powerful means of communicating what he termed "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (LE 4). The success of his poetry was dependent upon a complex combination of elements working together in unity. Hugh Selwyn Mauberley represents the culmination of years of experimenting with forms and imitating great artists.

Although many critics have given attention to the merits of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, few have recognized the unity and formal achievements of Pound in the poem. The poem has also been the subject of much controversy, both for its subject matter and the seemingly mysterious identity of the title figure; but rarely has it been discussed on the basis of form. In "A Retrospect" Pound explains his ideas concerning form in poetry; he rejects the use of embellishment and strictly

designed cadences unless they are necessary "to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed" (LE 9). It is true that the form of a poem consists of subject matter and diction, but these are only portions of the whole that create a work of art. Other elements such as rhythm and structural organization of language also play a vital role in Pound's poetry. To single out any one element of a poem and overemphasize its importance, therefore, is to disfigure the form. Unfortunately, this has happened in most critical essays on Mauberley. Parts have been emphasized to the detriment of the whole poem. Ian Bell, for example, has written several essays about Mauberley in which he singles out one or two words to build a criticism of the poem; most often his criticism leads away from the poem rather than to an understanding of it.[1]

     It is not always true that the author is the best judge of his work, but in the case of Mauberley, the appreciation for the poem as a whole is inextricably tied to the author's stated purpose; the success or failure of that purpose is to be judged by the critic. The identity of the title figure and the purpose of the work are clearly stated in a letter to Felix Schelling. In the letter Pound reacts to criticisms that have come to his attention as to whether he is Mauberley: "(Of course, I'm no more Mauberley than Eliot is Prufrock. Mais Passons.) Mauberley is a mere surface. Again a study in form, an attempt to condense the James novel. Meliora speramus" (LoEP 180). Pound's addition of the Latin phrase (which would be interpreted, "we hope for, look for, strive for the best or the good") is ambiguous; as we will see, he is not only looking

for the 'best' form but also for the 'best' in James.

Annotative criticisms of Mauberley identify particular names, words, and phrases; translate the foreign phrases; and identify allusions. Other critical works attempt to identify Mauberley and connect him with Pound. Still others highlight the rhythmic and imagist methods of Pound in the poem, but most critical essays either completely ignore or contradict what Pound says about the formal aspect of his poem and the connection with Henry James' theory of the novel form. [2]

The critic who gives more than casual mention of the relationship between Pound and James is John Espey. In the only book-length criticism of Mauberley, Ezra Pound's Mauberley, Espey acknowledges the fact that Pound had the Henry James novel in mind. The connection he makes with the James novel, however, is with subject matter and a comparison of characters rather than with form.

In his comparison of Pound to James, Espey begins with the empathy Pound surely must have felt with James as an international artist whose works had been neglected and, at best, misunderstood by his own people as well as those abroad. He notes that "the pressure of society exerted upon the individual" as a theme is predictably related to Pound's Mauberley " (EPM 50,51). From this point the critic attempts to compare Mauberley to one of James' characters---the most obvious being Lambert Strether in The Ambassadors, since he is a frustrated artist influenced by society. The assumption for the relationship is based on a quotation from Mauberley:

He had moved amid her phantasmagoria,

        Amid her galaxies,

which, as Hugh Kenner pointed out, was similar to Strether's

remark:

        Of course I moved among miracles. It was all

        phantasmagoria.

This connection does not adequately explain Pound's comment

that the poem is "an attempt to condense the James novel."

Espey admits the differences between Mauberley and Strether,

differences which overshadow the similarities. Espey continues

to search other James novels for clues to the relationship and

finds that Pound has quoted or borrowed from several of James'

novels, the most extensive being Embarrassments. There are

numerous direct and indirect quotations from the work that are

used in Mauberley (EPM 55-59).

        If one could isolate a particular novel as being the most

influential based on quotations taken from it, could one assume

that he had come to the heart of Pound's stated purpose and be

satisfied? If the reply were based purely on the fact that

Pound borrowed words, phrases, and images, the answer would

have to be negative. In the first place, words, phrases, and

images in themselves do not constitute James' form; they are

only the means of constructing the form. For Pound just to

choose such quotations would be a violation of his own idea of

imitation and experimentation. Pound admonished serious

artists to

        be influenced by as many great artists as you can,

        but have the decency either to acknowledge the debt

        outright, or to try to conceal it. Don't allow

'influence' to mean merely that you mop up the

particular decorative vocabulary of some one or two

poets whom you happen to admire. (LE 5)

In the second place, James was not the only artist Pound

borrowed from; there are a multitude of direct quotations from

other works woven into the poem, all of which contribute to the

theme of the poem.

Mauberley is not only a condensation of the James novel

but also a study in form. One cannot separate form from James'

novels any more than from Pound's poem. Adapting the form of

the James novel to poetic form is, after all, the crux of

Pound's remarks about a study in form.

Any possible connection between specific characters and

complete novels based on a comparison of details and

phraseology would be, in Espey's own terms, "so highly

speculative a connection that it can hardly be used as final

proof" (EPM 59) and would develop into a search for a buried

trunk of treasures only to find that the trunk was empty.

Ironically, Espey begins to tap the surface of the real

treasure when he mentions that "the entire suite of Mauberley

enjoys a structural relation with the novels of James as seen

by Pound." However, his few following remarks refer again to

character parallels and not to form.

What Espey finally states is that Embarrassments, as well

as other works of James, is best understood in its relationship

to Pound in Canto VII (EPM 59). Espey ends his search where he

started.

The most recent criticism concerning the relationship

between Pound and James is by Ian Bell, "A Mere Surface:
Wyndham Lewis, Henry James and the 'Latitude' of <u>Hugh Selwyn
Mauberley."</u>   In his opening paragraph, Bell states that
Pound's reference to "surface" as "mere" is an understatement
and that Pound's mention of a study in form and condensation of
the James novel is directly related to the similarity of
definition of "surface" in art that the two artists shared. He
calls the understatement a "syntactical breach with the
statements about form and the condensation of the James novel"
(P 53).

Bell, too, commits a "syntactical breach" in his
interpretation of Pound's remarks by divorcing the "mere
surface" quotation from Pound's preceding remarks in the
Schelling letter and bases his entire argument on a
misconception because of it.   Bell's argument is that the <u>poem</u>
is more than "mere" surface; Pound, however, never said that it
was "mere surface." He had used those words to describe
Mauberley, the title figure, not the poem. We can see this if
we put the quotation back in proper context. The preceding
parenthetical statement of Pound in the Schelling letter, that
he is "no more Mauberley than Eliot is Prufrock," is a clear
indication that he has the figure Mauberley in mind and not the
entire poem when he refers to the surface. If this observation
is correct, Bell has built his elaborate argument on an error,
and it would be pointless to continue this discussion except to
point out that he does raise a few interesting questions
concerning the relationship between Pound and James that bear
further investigation at a later time. 3

For now the important factors in the Bell essay are that he ties Pound and James together in their theories concerning "surfaces," which involve sculptural surfaces for Pound and character development in fiction for James. These factors are relevant to Pound's study in form, but Bell has done what most of the critics have done with Pound's intended purpose; he has taken a small portion of it and elaborately emphasized it at the expense of the poem itself. There is only brief mention of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley in his essay.

Ian Bell's chief concern is to prove that the poem is more than "mere surface," an idea with which Pound would agree if he (Pound) had been referring to the entire work. Since he was, I believe, speaking of the figure Mauberley, a further examination of the relationship of Mauberley to the whole poem would be necessary to find points of agreement with Bell's reference to the understatement of mere surface. Mauberley, however, as a figure in the poem, is not the primary focus so that as a "surface," in Bell's concept of the word (i.e., the surface of sculpture that defines and moves throughout the work), he would not provide the necessary structure to the poem to enable him to act as the surface.

From the perspective of Pound's intended purpose, we can only assume for the moment that the figure Mauberley is mere surface in the sense that he is only one of many elements that are at work in the form of the poem and not of primary importance independently. Bell discusses the definition or the nature of form but fails to analyze or relate the forms of Mauberley to the James novel.

For any argument or analysis of Pound's stated purpose to be valid, it should determine relationships between Pound's poetic form and James' novel form. Both Pound and James have definite ideas about surface, and in most cases they overlap, but the treatment of James' surface in fiction needs to be seen in light of what Pound does with it in his poem. Even if Bell is stressing Mauberley's importance to the form of the poem, which I do not believe he is, Bell would then be contributing to the identity controversy (i.e., the question as to whether Pound is Mauberley) by implying that Mauberley is the controlling identity or informant to the entire poem, entire because a "surface" would cover all external planes. Mauberley cannot be the surface, as I will indicate later in further detail, because he is not the speaker. The problem with Bell's evaluation, as well as with those of other evaluations, is in determining whether he is speaking of Mauberley, the poet, or Mauberley, the poem; he does not make a distinction between the two. If I read Bell correctly, he says that the critic must first argue that the surface of a work is foremost in the artist's mind. In this case, of course, to prove that Pound's Mauberley has greater importance in the poem is to deny that Pound is right to say that Mauberley is "mere surface."

That Mauberley as surface is much more than "mere" should be obvious to any reader, and that Mauberley is not surface in the sense of sculptural surface should also be obvious in light of the fact that he does not "move" throughout the entire sequence. Mauberley is not surface in James' sense of surface either, because he does not inform the poem, since he is not

the speaker, nor does he help to hold the form together. The argument gets confusing, but any way a critic interprets the thesis of the essay, Bell does little to clear the muddle of criticism concerning Mauberley as it pertains to the remarks by Pound in the Schelling letter.

In 1969 Hugh Witemeyer published The Poetry of Ezra Pound: Forms and Renewals 1908-1920. The title of the book indicates that it might be a good source for arguing the influence of the form of the James novel on Pound's poem. While Witemeyer does make several contributions to the interpretation of the formal elements of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, he constructs an entire chapter on an erroneous assumption, an assumption that denies the relationship of Pound's poem to the form of the James novel. It is conceivable that Pound may have been influenced by both Joyce and James, but Witemeyer fails to mention James' influence.

Witemeyer states that "there can be little doubt that Ezra Pound learned the technique [of his poem] from Joyce's Ulysses" (PoEP 164). He bases his assumption on a 1922 article in The Dial in which Pound praises Joyce's work: "The result is a triumph in form, in balance, a main schema with continuous inweaving and arabesque" (LE 406). Since Pound edited Ulysses, Witemeyer feels that Pound would have "had ample opportunity and time, before he finished Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, to grasp Joyce's structural design" (PoEP 164n). He also bases his claim of the relationship of Mauberley to Ulysses on the allusions to Odysseus in the poem.

Many other critics of Mauberley are led astray by the

belief that E. P., Mauberley, and Pound are synonymous. Pound, in Jamesian fashion, presents his characters via the impression of a central intelligence rather than through his usual persona and in doing so has managed to confuse those who put too much emphasis on Pound the poet. The fascination with Ezra Pound as an experimental poet, art critic, social critic, or political radical often gets in the way of critics' analyses of Pound's poems as works of art which have value separate and unto themselves. Pound has something to say about those kinds of critics in The ABC of Reading:

> It is only after long experience that most men are
> able to define a thing in terms of its own genius,
> painting as painting, writing as writing. You can
> spot the bad critic when he starts by discussing the
> poet and not the poem. (VoS 49)

However, an evaluation of Mauberley that attempts to steer critics away from Pound, the poet, must first speak of the poet, his intentions, and his relationship to James. After such an evaluation, we will turn to the poem to see if Pound achieved his intended purpose and, at the same time, hold the poem up as a work that stands on its own as one of the voices critical of nineteenth century English society, a condensed echo of the voice that rings from the James novels.

Notes

1 Ian Bell has written several books and articles about Pound and Mauberley; in each of them he includes many references to Pound's relationship to James regarding style but has not endeavored to explicate Mauberley in order to draw a parallel nor does he focus on the poem alone. His thesis in the 1986 Paideuma article pertains to what he believed was "a syntactical breach" regarding the "mere surface" of Mauberley; his comparison is with the treatment of surfaces in James', Pound's, and Lewis' work.

2 My use of the phrase "theory of the novel form" is somewhat misleading because it implies that James had a specific form by which he structured his novels; in actuality all of James' novels were searches for that form. I use the phrase in order to emphasize the various devices or techniques that James experimented with regarding form which Pound imitated in Mauberley, the most obvious example being the "central intelligence."

3 Bell contributes many valuable footnotes on this subject from the writings of other critics in his Paideuma essay. One such note was from Ronald Bush's The Genesis of Ezra Pound's Cantos in which Bush comments on the parallel between James convoluted syntax and Pound's condensed poetic language:

> James' endless sentence caught the energies of
> perceived actions in participles, and held those
> energies suspended while the mind of his speakers
> turned them over and over. / Pound began to see that

poetry did not need the actual presence of verbs so
much as a syntax that could incorporate their action
and relate it to other actions. (P 59n)

Pound's Criticism of James

The keys to unearthing the treasures of <u>Mauberley</u>, studying its form, and relating it to the James novel are found in "Baedecker" in <u>Little Review</u>, August, 1918, Pound's essay on the literary career of Henry James. He sets "out to explain . . . a few reasons why he [James] ought to be more read" (LE 295). In the essay Pound's empathy with James becomes immediately apparent, both in James' quest for freedom and his rejection as an artist by the literary society.

Pound praises James for his "ceaseless labour . . . to bring America on the side of civilization" and for his passion for "human liberty, personal liberty, the rights of the individual against all sorts of intangible bondage" (LE 296). Despite all of his passion for freedom, James was neglected by America and criticized for lacking emotion. He felt deeply, Pound argues, but the Americans had been insensitive to his passion in the same way that England had been insensitive to Pound's passion for shaking the traditional foundations of the shallow Victorian and Romantic poetry with its "pseudo-glamours and glamourlets and mists and fogs" (LE 380). "It is always easy," says Pound, "for people to object to what they have not tried to understand" (LE 297). In <u>Mauberley</u>, Pound challenges England to learn from him what America had rejected in the James novel.

The writing of <u>Mauberley</u> took place in the year following the James essay. At the time Pound, too, was suffering

grievous criticism in England for his "caustic and strident" poetry and critical reviews.[1] The same tone of bitterness toward England in his James essay is everywhere apparent in the poem. In Mauberley Pound forms a one-man literary army to wage war against the Victorian purists in America and England who sacrificed direct presentation and the use of the "mot juste" to Tennysonian tone. Victorian purists accepted any art "in just such measure as it approaches the Tennysonian tone," even Shakespeare when he is "Tennysonian." Pound referred to Tennyson's poetry as "pretty embroideries," implying that he shows the beautified side of art and life and not the side with the loose threads and knots that hold them together (LE 277). After a long struggle to bring about a "new Renaissance," Pound completed the poem and left England; the poem became his farewell address.

Although there is a sense in which the tone of the whole poem conveys the struggle for freedom and for understanding, not only for the artist but for the poem itself, the formal structure, the theme, and variations on a theme hold it together. Each of Henry James' novels, with the endless details, profuse rhetoric, and artfully contrived social situations, is massive, but the continuing theme of social bondage has the same unifying power as it does in Pound's poem.

Pound and James have much in common where theme is concerned, yet Pound's criticism of James' style explains the underlying motivation for Pound's condensation of the James novel. Regarding James' early style, Pound praises his sensibility and his thorough recording of people, of their

atmosphere, society, personality, and setting. He criticizes James for "having so excessively cobwebbed, fussed, blathered, worried about minor mundanities" (LE 311). He goes on to say of James' early style that "he appears at times to write around and around a thing and not always to emerge from the 'amorous plan' of what he wanted to present, into definite presentation" (LE 306). Definite presentation, always important to Pound, becomes a key link between James' later, experimental period and Pound's poem.

In the Prefaces, James acknowledges the validity of Pound's point to an extent when he expresses not only his desire to simplify, intensify, and dramatize his work but his weakness in doing so with his previous style. Since Pound claims to have read the Prefaces, they also provide a multitude of clues upon which to build a case for Pound's condensation.

Using references from the Prefaces, Pound analyzes James' intended purposes and comments on his successes and failures accordingly. During the "period of allegories," (The Real Thing, Dominick Ferrand, The Liar), James became "discontent with the short sentence, epigram, etc." He lengthened his sentences as a means of "a thickening, a chiaroscuro" to add opacity, but, as Pound notes, he overdoes it (LE 304). Pound compares a Jamesian spoken sentence "to a pile driver, slowly cranked up, with many pauses, laborings, and diversions" (PE 12).

Pound notes throughout "Baedecker" that what James needed most was brevity. He compliments James, in "sunnier circumstances," for his "elaborate paragraph beautifully

attaining its climax [and] the sudden incision when a brief statement could dispose of a matter," yet Pound notes that James' long, cobwebby sentences were hindrances to ordinary readers (LE 311). One such sentence is quoted by Pound from Lady Barbarina:

> He believed, or tried to believe, the salon now possible in New York on condition of its being reserved entirely for adults; and in having taken a wife out of a country in which social traditions were rich and ancient he had done something toward qualifying his own house---so splendidly qualified in all strictly material respects---to be the scene of such an effort.

Pound refers to Lady Barbarina as "a study in English blankness" (LE 312); the sentence quoted above reveals the tone of blankness that matches the triviality of English society. The elaborate syntax was difficult for ordinary readers to follow, and the treatment of subject was socially objectionable to the English.

The most cobwebby novels of James, according to Pound, were The Wings of a Dove and The Golden Bowl. In The American Scene and all items of The Finer Grain, "he comes out the triumphant stylist" (LE 304). James' "dip into 'cleverness,' into epigrammatic genre, the bare epigrammatic style" in the nineties reveals his search for art that was closely related to drama if not poetry (LE 304).

It was, in fact, the need for conciseness that led him to drama in 1890. Walter Isle, in Experiments in Form, writes of

Henry James' major period after his experimentation with drama; Isle concludes that the dramatic years were failures as far as stage presentation was concerned, but the novels written in the post-drama period attest to his tremendous growth during that time toward conciseness, and improvement upon the cobwebby, didactic earlier style to which Pound objected (EF 18-38).

One of the reasons Pound cited as a cause for James' failure in his early writing to achieve conciseness was that he had not studied the Classics; this criticism corresponds to Pound's belief that the serious artist, in order

> to know anything about the relative efficiency of various works, must have some knowledge of the maximum already attained by various authors, irrespective of where and when. (LE 26)

Pound does acknowledge James' knowledge of certain French novelists and of his contemporaries, but he felt that the emulation of the classic writers, in addition to the use of classical allusions, would have aided James because of the achievements of the classical masters in "charging language." He states that "if James had read the classics, the better Latins especially," his sentences would not have been "so excessively cobwebbed" (LE 311). He also notes:

> James' lamentable lack of the classics is perhaps responsible for his absorption in bagatelles...He has no real series of backgrounds of 'moeurs du passe,' only the 'sweet dim faded lavender' tone in opposition to modernity, plush nickel-plated, to disparagement, naturally, of the latter. (LE 323)

It is in this vein that Pound's style differs so greatly from James'. Pound, according to his own theory of imitation, allows allusions in Mauberley to carry a great deal of the weight of meaning in the poem; his use of allusions is a major source of conciseness and intensity. In Mauberley he is imitating James, the classical masters, and anyone else who came before him who could help him to say what he wanted to say and do so more effectively.

Although there are many differences in style, both artists stress over and again the need for conciseness, intensity, and significant detail. After the publication of The Awkward Age, James reflects in the Prefaces on its creation and admits that the novel, which started out as a "small thing," became a "comparative monster" (AoN 98). In several of the prefaces, he admits to losing control, but nothing "breaks the heart" like the "difficulty produced by the loose foundation or the vague scheme" (AoN 109). For the purpose of strengthening the foundation of his fiction, James worked diligently and intently on designs or forms before applying his theme to them so that "on that hard fine floor the element of execution feels it may more or less confidently dance" (AoN 109). Concerning form, he states further:

> I was thus to have here [in the writing of the
> preface] an envious glimpse, in carrying my design
> through, of that artistic rage and that artistic
> felicity which I have ever supposed to be intensest
> and highest, the confidence of the dramatist strong
> in the sense of his postulate. The dramatist has

verily to build, is committed to architecture, to

construction at any cost; to driving in deep his

vertical supports and laying across and firmly fixing

his horizontal, his resting pieces---at the risk of

no matter what vibration from the tap of his

master-hammer. This makes the active value of his

basis immense, enabling him, with his flanks

protected, to advance undistractedly, even if not at

all carelessly, into the comparative fairy-land of

the mere minor anxiety. In other words his scheme

holds, and as he feels this in spite of noted strains

and under repeated tests, so he keeps his fact to the

day. (AoN 109)

Detail, according to James, allowed for concrete presentation

(i.e., dramatization) rather than "the officious explanation

which we know as 'going behind'" (AoN 117).

In the writing of fiction, "co-ordination and

vivification" and "cross-references" are carefully "counted and

disposed, weighted with responsibility." In speaking of a

particular chapter in The Awkward Age, James states that "all

the pieces of the game on the table together [are] each

unconfusedly and contributively placed, as triumphantly

scientific" (AoN 117). Pound's "direct treatment of the

'thing'" and his insistence that a writer "use absolutely no

word that does not contribute to the presentation" is similar

to James' notion of presentation, and suggests still another

reason for Pound's admiration for James' novel form.

James' later period "is most complicated and elaborate,"

Pound admits, yet "he is capable of great concision." Despite his lengthy, complex sentences, James says "on one page more than many a more 'direct' author would convey only in the course of a chapter" (LE 299). He says of James' "thinking" in the first twenty pages of "The Author of Beltraffio" that it is "magnificently done, . . . stated with great concision," and he lauds James' boldness in "not blinking" at the "literature in the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century" which was where "science was in the days of Galileo and the Inquisition" (LE 314-316). Even in James' lengthy sentences, the turns and evolutions run as threads throughout the works to contribute to the unity of form.

In each of his works, James was almost driven to find still another new form that would be more direct and intense than the last. James' experiments with "new forms" cannot be categorized nor can Pound's experiments with poetic forms. James was striving for some new structure to fit his theme, but the form always seemed to evolve into the novel. What James would mean by "new forms" is difficult to classify because the definition seemed to change with each attempt.

Reading James' comments in the Prefaces, one might conclude that what James was striving for was something more akin to poetry, if not sculpture, but he was never able to achieve the highly-condensed art, as his attempt at drama testifies. His sensibility and craftsmanship fought against the conciseness of form that he sought. What he achieved, even in his frustration, was a kind of fiction that marked a dramatic change in narrative form and brought the novel form

into the arena of fine art. And it was James, perhaps, through his experiments with scene and summary in novels like The Spoils of Poynton, and not Joyce, who first sensed the movement of the novel from the Victorian, Romantic mode to a psychological form that paralleled the changes in thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Pound applauded James' experiments with form and felt an empathy with the experimental, searching spirit that was driving James to make the form of his work convey his theme. But, as we will see in Mauberley, Pound sought to condense James' cobwebby sentences into the refined language of poetry that directly and intensely presents "intellectual and emotional complex[es] in an instant of time" (LE 4). Pound takes what he considers the best of James and corrects the weaknesses; the inevitable result is a turn from the dramatic novel of James to the imagist poetry of Pound.

Even though Pound criticizes James' convoluted sentences and his lack of experience with the classics, the passion James had for finding the 'right' form and experimenting with new forms placed him on Pound's list of the great writers of the nineteenth century. Sergio Perosa, in Henry James and the Experimental Novel, expresses best the change in James' style that relates him to Pound's experiment with form:

> In the former [novels] James seemed to be testing new
> subjects and themes rather than new techniques, even
> though the new thematic concerns inevitably turned to
> new narrative forms. In the latter his tireless
> activity led him to experiment openly with new

methods, forms, and techniques suited to the new
themes ("being 'very artistic,' I have a constant
impulse to try experiments in form," he had written
as early as 1878 to his brother William) to the
extent, one might say, of working out new forms to
determine new contents, or even raising the formal
elaboration itself to thematic dignity. (HJaEN 5)

Both Pound and the "major" James were concerned with technique
as well as theme. In "The Serious Artist" Pound refers to the
"bad artist" who is allowed to continue to create, "or [to be]
supported and encouraged," even though he is technically
inefficient. "England . . . would rather have patent medicines
than scientific treatment [and] . . . will not consider the
'problem of style'" (LE 48). What they prefer is "the value of
art to life," but what they fail to realize, Pound says, is
that "the arts give us our data of psychology." That Pound is
very much concerned with the "how" of art, perhaps more than he
is the "what," seems obvious. Precision, referring to
technical perfection, is "the Touchstone of an art." He uses
the analogy of the skillful physician trained to diagnose and
treat diseases rather than making surface observations and
generalized recommendations. Experimentation is the basis for
technical perfection in poetry as it is in science.

Arguing in favor of technique, Pound states that "good
writing is writing that is perfectly controlled, the writer
says just what he means" (LE 50). The language of poetry,
technically executed, communicates ideas and emotions. Without
the technical control, idea and emotion are lost. Poetry

requires that the

> thinking word-arranging, clarifying faculty move and
> leap with energizing, sentient, musical faculties.
> It is precisely the difficulty of this amphibious
> existence that keeps down the census record of good
> poets. (LE 52)

In his essays, Pound has more to say of technique than theme.
The theme of Mauberley, ironically, deals with the prostitution
of art, religion, politics, and culture; the concern is that
expression is controlled by a society that cares nothing for
accurate representation of truth but for profit only. So, even
his theme is concerned with corruption of artistic technique.
Precision in art, Pound believed, requires freedom of
expression and experimentation with technique; when artists are
stifled in expression and forced to conform to social demands,
they become prostitutes to the "age." The "age" of which Pound
was writing, it seems, cares little for precision and the fine,
significant detail found in works by artists like Pound and
James.

In various writings, Pound mentions James' fine eye for
detail; detail for Pound and James meant something far beyond
insignificant or irrelevant descriptive language. James
rejected photo-realism because of the concentration of details
that added nothing to the significance of the work. The
editors of American Literary Criticism, 1860-1905 express
James' sentiments regarding photo-realism:

> Those who 'get up' a photographic representation of
> experience could be shrewdly observant and widely

experienced, and they might have a 'turn for color,'
but the tendency, to his mind, was to overlay the
canvas with too much detail. (ALC 65)

Pound, too, rejected unnecessary details; he states in "A
Retrospect" that one should "use no superfluous word, no
adjective which does not reveal something" (LE 4). He states
later in the same essay: "Don't be descriptive; remember that
the painter can describe a landscape much better than you can,
and that he has to know a deal more about it" (LE 6).

The inflated, decorative language popularized by the
Romantics was rejected by Pound and James. Poetry, Pound
believed, should consist of substance that was, in Maurice
Hewlett's term, "nearer the bone," with hardness and "force
[that] will lie in its truth [and] interpretative power . . .
[with fewer] painted adjectives." What Pound was striving for
was poetry that was "austere, direct, free from emotional
slither" (LE 12). He refers to Wordsworth as "a silly old
sheep wth a genius, an unquestionable genius, for imagisme, for
a presentation of natural detail . . . [but] he buried [his
talent] in a desert of bleatings." Unfortunately, the
nineteenth century "wanted confections" (LE 277). What Pound
expected to see when looking "back upon" the nineteenth century
is a "rather blurry, messy sort of a period, a rather
sentimentalistic, mannerish sort of a period" because of an
inability to render "external nature or emotion" explicitly (LE
11).

Like Pound, James objected to the "sentimentalized" work
of the Romantics because of

the falsifying of fact and truth, which in turn
compromised the 'appearance of reality.' The modern
propensity for romances, he thought, may be 'running
away with the human mind, and operating as a kind of
leakage in the evolution of thought'. (ALC 65,66)

The selection of details by Pound and James was based on the
direct presentation of reality through images or descriptions
that "in an instant of time" relate to the tone of the
situation, the personality of characters, and the peculiar
moods of a given society simultaneously. Significantly,
descriptive details are to the James novels what images and
allusions are to Pound's poems.

In the Literary Essays, Pound describes two of the reasons
for James' greatness in his last years:

his hatred of personal intimate tyrannies working at
close range; and secondly, in later life, because the
actual mechanism of his scriptorial process became so
bulky, became so huge a contrivance for record and
depiction, that the old man simply couldn't remember
or keep his mind on or animadvert on anything but the
authenticity of his impression. (LE 299)

To understand Pound's evaluation of the elder James, we can
compare James to a muralist who must stand very close to a
small section of his vast painting, concentrating on detail
without the entire work in view. What James produced when he
stood "at close range" to particular situations in his work
were the kinds of concentrated details that spoke volumes in a
few carefully selected words. The intensity of language in

each specific episode was interwoven masterfully through the whole work by the intelligence informing it, even though James mentions at times that the elaboration of details added to the vastness or massiveness of the work and that the work often took control from him. Of The Awkward Age, for example, he says that he intended a short story on a "small square canvas," but the story "had underhandedly plotted to be long" (AoN 100). Had James not been thinking small when he created the fine details of his story, the intensity of the novels might have been lost, as Pound suggests. The close-range details were the genius of the late style of Henry James.

One such close-range detail is found in The Spoils of Poynton. Although the title suggests that the novel is about furniture, James spend very little time and description on the furniture. What he does describe in detail, including its origin, is a Maltese Cross. The cross is symbolic of many things in the novel. For one, the cross was found by a "clue followed through mazes of secrecy till the treasure was at last unearthed" (SoP 54), in the same way that Fleda Vetch's love for Owen Gereth, veiled in a maze of secrecy regarding her emotions and her guarded conversations with him, is eventually unearthed. The crucifix is more than anything the symbol of salvation. Fleda, from the moment Mrs. Gereth spotted her "dressed in an idea," was appointed as savior for Owen as well as for Mrs. Gereth's beloved Poynton. Mrs. Gereth even went so far as to sit down at Fleda's feet and beg her to "save him, save him" (SoP 91). Owen's letter requesting that Fleda take something of her choice from Poynton, suggesting the Maltese

Cross, implies that he felt she could in some way save Poynton, or at least the essence of it. But Fleda waited too long; her hesitation resulted in her failure to save not only the Maltese Cross but also Owen from the clutches of Mona Brigstock, and Poynton from utter destruction. The irony in James' use of the Maltese Cross serves still another function; it reveals Mrs. Gereth's twisted sense of value. Mrs. Gereth was a Jew.

The use of the Maltese Cross is an indication of James' genius in making one detail provide a layering effect which contributes to the coherence and form of the novel. The search for significant details like the Maltese Cross occupied a great deal of James' creative time. The ability to manipulate language and "drive toward utter precision of word[s]" for a given purpose is the attribute that best relates James and Pound stylistically. In "How to Read" Pound describes the three kinds of poetry as melopoeia, phanopoeia, and logopoeia, each pertaining to the sense in which language is used. His explanation of logopoeia best relates his use of language in the poem to that of James:

> Logopoeia, 'the dance of the intellect among words',
> that is to say, it employs words not only for their
> direct meaning, but it takes count in a special way
> of habits of usage, of the context we expect to find
> with the word, its usual concomitants, of its known
> acceptances, and of ironical play. It holds the
> aesthetic content which is peculiarly the domain of
> verbal manifestation, and cannot possibly be
> contained in plastic or in music. (LE 25)

James' use of details, in the "logopoeia" sense, not only informs the reader about theme but also creates ambiguity and irony that serve to hold the organic form together.

Another aspect of form that provides organic unity in the James novel is point of view. James, particularly in his late period, sought the means for achieving autonomy and distance in his work. Pound concludes, however, that the major James had almost accidentally, or by a quirk of old age, found a way to step aside as the artist and let his work speak more effectively. So bulky and massive were the processes of James, states Pound, that they

> should heave him out of himself, out of his personal
> limitations, out of the tangles of heredity and of
> environment, out of the bias of early training, of
> early predilections, whether of Florence, A. D. 1300,
> or of Back Bay of 1872, and leave him simply the
> great true recorder. (LE 300)

James' theory of the "process of vision"[2] involved a movement toward an unfolding of the impressions of his characters so that the reader discovered life at the same time and through the eyes of the character or the "central intelligence." James' early style was somewhat hindered, according to Pound, because of the interference of statements that only James could have written "in his own so beautiful talk" (LE 306). James, in his later novels, found more effective ways to step aside, some intentional, some accidental to the bulk of his work.

Since Pound was interested in James' experiments with point of view, the challenge to Pound of condensing James'

experiments with point of view is important to the discussion of <u>Hugh Selwyn Mauberley</u> and will be dealt with more specifically later in relationship to the speaker of Pound's poem. As to other elements of the James novel that Pound may have emulated, one might assume that because Pound's mind was refreshed on James' novels and short stories, he would be influenced by all of James' works in one way or another. Regarding form, there are many similarities between James' intended purpose in <u>The Awkward Age</u> and the form of <u>Hugh Selwyn Mauberley</u> which directly corresponds to Pound's statement that "a man can learn more music by working on a Bach fugue until he can take it apart and put it together, than by playing through ten dozen heterogeneous albums" (LE 27). The tightly constructed form of <u>The Awkward Age</u> lends itself to being taken apart and put back together.

After reading and evaluating all of the works of Henry James, Pound compares his forty-plus volumes to the six volumes of Flaubert. He considers James and Flaubert as masters in the nineteenth century. The influence of Flaubert would be easier to contain because of the brevity of his works, but Pound wondered that the bulk of James' work might be overlooked or "go into desuetude" (LE 330). He questions whether James' work could be reduced to five or six volumes "so selected as to hold its own internationally." He replies:

> My contention is for this possibility. My notes are
> no more than a tentative suggestion, to wit: that
> some such compact edition might be, to advantage,
> tried on the less patient public. I have been, alas,

no more fortunate than our subject in keeping out [of this review] irrelevant, non-aesthetic, non-literary, non-technical vistas and strictures. (LE 331)

The last portion of the quotation indicates Pound's frustration in reducing an artist's work to a review. His attitude toward criticism implies that criticism of a work should not take the place of a work, and "all that the critic can do for the reader or audience or spectator is to focus his gaze or audition" (LE 13). He had said in a 1913 article, "The Serious Artist," that he thought "one work of art [was] worth forty prefaces and as many apologiae" (LE 32). His concluding remarks about the James essay suggests that he had not successfully "explained" James' work in a concise manner so that if the critical essay had failed to convey the greatness of James' contribution to art, perhaps his poem would. Though he did not state in the essay that he intended to write a poem pertaining to the James novel, it is conceivable, considering his remarks above, that the essay provided the germ for the poem. Therefore, the condensation of the James novels in poetry would appear to be the next logical step for Pound.

In "A Retrospect" Pound writes, regarding condensation: "The art of popular success lies simply in never putting more on one page than the most ordinary reader can lick off it in his normally rapid, half-attentive skim-over" (LE 32). Ezra Pound would not have been so deceived as to think that one might be able to please every reader, but he was sensitive to the ways an artist might at least come closer to being read more. Making James' novels more accessible to readers, of

course, was his chief concern in the James essay: to put James into a more concise form so that, like Flaubert, he might be more widely accepted and not "go into desuetude." The remarks about James' work and those in "A Retrospect" explains why he would attempt a condensation in the first place. The challenge was two-fold: to condense the forty-plus volumes of James' genius and convictions into one work, and to achieve in poetry what James had attempted to do in drama and the novel. The result was a concise, acute observation of the social, political, religious, literary, and artistic life of late nineteenth and early twentieth century England.

If we list the qualities of Henry James---his passion for personal liberty; his genius for detail in characterization and social scene; his keen observation and representation of reality; his own freedom of expression which we might call his "distance"; his intense desire for charged language; and his ceaseless labors in finding proper forms for his art---we would need only substitute Pound's name for James' to have a list of the qualities of the poetics in Hugh Selwyn Mauberley. The similarities between the two artists provide further evidence that Mauberley is a condensation of the James novel.

In addition to these considerations, we have the knowledge of Pound's passion for teaching and for advancing what he considered "good writing." His reason for writing "Baedecker" was to encourage readers to read James; Pound sifted through the novels and short stories for the best or most significant works. The conclusion of Pound's appointed task was not the end of the Little Review essay but the creation of Hugh Selwyn

Mauberley. In the poem Pound attempted to make the message and various stylistic devices of James more accessible by condensing an oak into an acorn, an acorn having within its compressed, organic form all that is required to make a grand oak.

Notes

[1] In The Roots of Treason: Ezra Pound and the Secret of St. Elizabeths, E. Fuller Torrey gives an account of the problems with Amy Lowell, the grief over the death of Henri Gaudier, and the subsequent negative reviews of his work that were present in Pound's life prior to the writing of Mauberley, accounting for Pound's "caustic and strident" criticisms and poetry. (79-86)

[2] The "process of vision," Beach says, is the "process of the story." James' stories "are records of seeing rather than doing" (MoHJ 56). He records James' comment that "the business of my tale and the march of my action, not to say the precious moral of everything, is just my demonstration of this process of vision " (MoHJ 56).

The "Germ" for Mauberley

Pound had written in "The Serious Artist" that in order
for language to fit emotion and bring "intellectual and
emotional complex[es]" into harmony, "ideas, or fragments of
ideas . . . must form an organism, they must be an oak sprung
from an acorn" (LE 51). This, he felt, was what Henry James
had done in his novels; James began each short story or novel
with what he called a "germ," often only a one-word idea, which
captivated him as it "turned over and over in the mind until
the last drop of suggestion that could come from the original
suggestion was squeezed out of it" (MoHJ XVI). What usually
developed was the majestic oak grown naturally from the "germ"
or "acorn" from which it began.

The line from the "Ode" in which the speaker eulogizes "E.
P." for being "bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the
acorn," is the earliest recognition of Pound's purpose in Hugh
Selwyn Mauberley as it relates to the James novel. What Ezra
Pound is attempting in Hugh Selwyn Mauberley is to wring
"lilies" (i.e., poetic expression) from James' acorns, while at
the same time compressing the "lilies" wrung from prose into
poetic form rather than creating better prose. Pound was
attempting to condense the James novel, and he achieved his
results by transforming his criticism of James' work, which he
had reviewed in the "Baedecker" essay, into fine art; thus
Mauberley becomes Pound's poetic expression of his criticism of
the James novel.

The language of the "Ode" and the introduction of "E. P." in the first poem have been most responsible for the controversies over the identity of Mauberley and E. P. Critics like Hugh Witemeyer have "E. P" appearing "as a young man about town visiting M. Verog, taking the advice of Mr. Nixon, waiting in Lady Valentine's drawing room" as well as acting as an observer. A. C. Partridge, in The Language of Modern Poetry, states that "Pound records events through the eyes of Mauberley" (LoMP) which cannot be because the speaker in the poems following the "Ode" is using first-person pronouns and not the third-person "he" of the "Ode." Only when the speaker is speaking of someone other than himself does he use "he," including references to Mauberley.

Sifting through the poem for personal pronouns reveals that there is an unnamed speaker who is a recorder of what he sees and experiences in his own environment and present time. In the "E. P. Ode Pour L'Election De Son Sepulchre" poem, the speaker refers to E. P. as "he," "him," and "his." There is no first-person pronoun to identify E. P. as the speaker. In addition to that, the poem is an ode to E. P. on his burial. Even though the burial is ambiguous, dependent on whether one believes E. P. to be literally dead or artistically separated, the use of third-person pronouns negates the possibility of E. P.'s being the speaker. If one wanted to stretch a Jamesian fascination with ghosts, he might conclude that E. P.'s ghost is the speaker, but this is not very likely. (If there were a ghost inspiring the poem, it would most likely be James'.)

Mauberley's name is not mentioned at all in the first

portion of the poem. The omission of his name might suggest
that Mauberley is the speaker except that in the second part,
beginning with the poem "Mauberley," the artist for whom the
poem is named is referred to in third-person pronouns just as
E. P. is in the first part. The next three poems are about
him, not by him. The problem with referring to what Mauberley
"says" about E. P. or anything else and attempting to identify
his personality with Pound's is that Mauberley does not "say"
anything. All we know about Mauberley is what the speaker of
the poem tells us. There is a first-person narrator informing
the poem who is not identified with E. P. or Mauberley, or with
any other artists named, for that matter. The first-person
narrator is obviously neither E. P. nor Mauberley.

Having dispensed with Mauberley and E. P. as the speakers,
we can begin to see Jamesian conventions used by Pound that
make the speaker of the poem what James referred to as the
"central intelligence."

For now it is reasonable to conclude that since the "Ode"
is the beginning poem, Pound thought he had devised a means of
breaking any possible connection between himself and the
speaker of the poem. One of the first questions raised by the
"Ode" is, naturally, whether E. P. is Pound. Since Pound
frequently used his initials in referring to himself, we might
assume that he is E. P. or that E. P. is what the poet Pound
might have become had he not had the talent to mature and write
Mauberley and The Cantos; hence, by burying E. P., he buries
himself. Pound seemed to know his critics quite well, and he
probably knew that they would do what they have done: become so

involved with Pound, the poet, that they miss the poem altogether. Even though burying himself was an extreme measure, it has apparently failed in diverting the attention of the critics.

James, looking back over his own work, remarks in the preface to The Awkward Age that "the thing done and dismissed has . . . a trick of looking dead, if not buried, so that [the artist] almost throbs with ectasy when, on an anxious review, the flush of life reappears" (AoN 99). What James refers to is clearly a detachment of the artist from his work once it takes on a life of its own. The artist gives life to the work, but the work, when successfully executed, stands on its own, apart from its creator. Pound's burial of E. P. (i.e., himself) is one of our first glimpses of an experimentation with point of view that is a departure from the personae of his previous poems.

Because of these controversies surrounding the identity of E. P., the most misunderstood element of the poem is the point of view. Like so many of Pound's critics, David Holbrook, in Lost Bearings in English Poetry, finds Mauberley confusing because "at the moment of embarking on the poem one has a strange feeling of double vision, of not being able to get the persona and poet into focus" (LB 60). What Holbrook and the others do not realize is that this is as it should be. Admittedly, the seeming fuzziness is a chief concern for readers but not so serious a problem if one focuses on the speaker of the poem as distinct from both Mauberley and E. P. From the naive critics' standpoint, both Mauberley and E. P.

are the possible personae for Ezra Pound. Mistaking either of
the characters as the speaker, however, causes confusion and
makes Mauberley all the more obscure.

Holbrook uses words like "failures," "schizoid," and
"sterile" to describe the poem; words like these in a
criticism are the very reason that the understanding of James'
methods and Pound's reactions to them in Mauberley is important
to an interpretation of the poem. Holbrook stresses that the
form is weak, sterile and schizoid. He, too, is confusing
Pound with the poem and with the speaker of the poem. The
failure of the artists in the poem is quite a different matter
from the success or failure of the poem itself as a work of
art. The theme of the poem is the weaknesses, failures, and
struggles of artists caught in an "age" that "demands"
something other than fine art, yet the theme, by no means,
makes the poem "schizoid" or "sterile" as Holbrook suggests.

David Holbrook's thesis for Lost Bearings in English
Poetry is that "poetry has lost confidence in itself and that
this is part of a widespread failure of human creativity" (LB
11). He feels that poets are not dealing with reality for
"fear of creative dynamics, of passion, even of intentional
vision" (LB 72). "Pound is afraid of life," says Holbrook. He
uses the theme of the poem to equate Pound with the failing or
frustrated artists in the poem. As mentioned above, the poem
was written during a particularly frustrating time in Pound's
life, but the very presence of the poem in a collection is
reason to believe that Pound was striving to create something
"new" in order to rise above the failing and frustrated artists

of the nineteenth century.

Confusing the failures and frustrations of the artists in the poem with the poet of Mauberley is a common misconception that hinders the unlocking of the treasures of the poem. Questions of success and failure of the poem as a work of art should be related to its formal aspects rather than to its connections with the poet. Crucial to the form of the poem is Pound's use of a Jamesian point of view. If we dispense with Mauberley and E. P. as the speakers or, in James' terms, as the central intelligences of the poem, we can begin to see the Jamesian conventions used by Pound to make the central intelligence an intelligence that presides over the entire poem. The speaker of the poem comments on what happens to both E. P. and Mauberley.

Although he did experiment with shifts of point of view, James insisted on continuity of point of view as an "economy of treatment" and that one ought to adopt "a related point of view [that seeks] a steady consistency of effect, the intensity and concentration that come of an exact centering of attention upon the chosen plot of consciousness" (MoHJ 60). The consistency of consciousness lends to the novel a unifying force. In like manner, the point of view that Pound selects for Hugh Selwyn Mauberley creates unity in an otherwise scattered, fragmented selection of poems with seemingly dissimilar themes. One possible means of unifying poems on such diverse topics is presenting them as impressions of one consciousness or central intelligence.

Regarding the creation of the unifying central

intelligence, James states that the "'major propriety,' the
great 'compositional law' was 'that of employing but one centre
and keeping all within [his] hero's consciousness'" (MoHJ 63).
The centers of consciousness in the James novels were the minds
through which the reader saw reality. The central intelligence
presents what he sees, but he also interprets; therefore, the
speaker must, of necessity, be a person "of fine
discrimination, of keen penetration, of delicate sensibility"
(MoHJ 64). The character whose consciousness interprets for
the reader holds

> the drama . . . the very drama of that
> consciousness---which [James] had of course to make
> sufficiently acute in order to enable it, like a set
> and lighted scene, to hold the play . . . . It had,
> naturally . . . not to be too acute---which would
> have disconnected it and made it superhuman: the
> beautiful little problem was to keep it connected,
> connected intimately, with the general human exposure
> . . . and yet to endow it with such intelligence that
> the appearance reflected in it, and constituting
> together there the situation and the 'story,' should
> become by that fact intelligible. (MoHJ 64)

From this quotation we can see a glimpse of James' effort to
create the proper distance between his intelligent observer and
his audience. In the introduction of The Art of the Novel,
Richard Blackmur claims that "the one faculty James felt that
the artist may require of his audience is that of close
attention or deliberate appreciation; for it is by this

faculty alone that the audience participates in the work of art" (AoN xvii).

Speaking further of James' intense desire to communicate with the audience, Blackmur says that James achieves audience communication by the devices of

> indirect approach and the dramatic scene . . .
> calculated to command, direct, and to limit or frame
> the reader's attention . . . . The characterizing
> aspect of the Indirect Approach is this: the
> existence of a definite created sensibility
> interposed between the reader and the felt experience
> which is the subject of the action. James never put
> his reader in direct contact with his subjects; he
> believed it was impossible to do so, because his
> subject really was not what happened but what someone
> felt about what happened, and this could be directly
> known only through an intermediate intelligence. The
> Dramatic Scene was the principal device James used to
> objectify the Indirect Approach and give it
> self-limiting form. (AoN xviii)

The dramatic scenes in the James novels are interpreted by the central intelligence, and, at the same time, each scene sheds light on the central intelligence. In the preface to The Awkward Age, James explains how he plans for the formal arrangement of what he referred to as "lamps":

> The central object was my situation, my subject in
> itself, to which the thing would owe its title, and
> the small rounds represented so many distinct lamps,

as I like to call them, the function of each of which
would be to light with all due intensity one of its
aspects. I had divided it, did n't they see? into
aspects---uncanny as the little term might sound
(though not for a moment did I suggest we should use
it for the public), and by that sign we would
conquer. (AoN 110)

In the same way that James uses "lamps," Pound uses his
individual poems to illuminate the society (which includes
Mauberley, for Mauberley is a victim of the same society) of
his speaker. The poems also provide a movement of the
speaker's consciousness. The poems unfold various aspects of
the speaker's society or "age" beginning with the speaker's
impressions of an artist buried by the age, impressions of
literary, political, and religious upheavals, and concluding
with his impressions of artists who respond to the demands of
the age via poetry.

James also refers to the "unnamed, unintroduced,
unwarranted participant, the impersonal author's concrete
deputy or delegate" who makes his impression "objectively
pictorial without any recourse to the 'mere muffled majesty of
irresponsible 'authorship' given with greater authority" (MoHJ
68). Although the speaker of Mauberley is unnamed,
unintroduced, and provides many concrete details, he is not
completely objective; Pound's choice of allusions and images
attempts to sway the viewer and indicates a bias inherent in
the speaker. We could naturally assume that the bias is that
of Pound, but again, Pound appears to be imitating another

element of James' central intelligence, the consciousness who has a natural relationship to the other characters, a relationship which leads to a lack of objectivity.

Joseph Warren Beach, in The Methods of Henry James, says, regarding the speaker's relationship to the other characters, that it evolves from a

> situation [that] has come to his notice, in the first instance, in a perfectly natural manner; and if he goes on to pursue his inquiry, this is the result of a friendly or professional interest proper enough. In a considerable number of cases he is a man of letters for whom the interest in a literary phenomenon comes to reinforce his friendly sympathy for the persons concerned. (MoHJ 69)

This seems to me a reasonable description of the speaker of Mauberley. He is captivated by the burial of E. P. and is sensitive to the social injustices done to him. His sympathy is demonstrated by his observation that the poet "strove to resuscitate the dead art of poetry." Had the speaker been unsympathetic, he would not have referred to poetry as a "dead art"; it was E. P.'s insistence that poetry needed "resuscitating" that put him in disfavor and "out of key with his time." In ending the first stanza with "Wrong from the start---," the speaker expresses the attitude of E. P.'s society. In the first line of the second stanza when he adds, "No, hardly", he makes it clear that he thinks that the attitude is wrong and not what E. P. attempted. He shifts the blame back on the "half savage country, out of date" in which

E. P. had been born.

In the "Yeux Glauques" poem, the speaker's sympathies are with other artists like E. P. who become victims of society's abuse, particularly those artists of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood who attempted to break out of the Victorian mode of poetry. These critical accusations in the poem indicate that the speaker is involved in or closely related to the subject of the poem, perhaps as a "man of letters . . . [who has] friendly sympathy for the persons concerned" (MoHJ 69).

The first concrete evidence the reader has of the speaker of Mauberley is in poem III. The observations of poem III are not those of or by "he," as in the "Ode." By using "we," the speaker involves himself in society; in the last line, he introduces himself as the "I" who questions the placement of a "tin wreath" upon a "god, man, or hero." Not only by the first-person reference but also by the implication of the cheapness of the wreath does he reveal his involvement in the theme of the poem, his criticism of the aesthetic decadence of the age.

James was striving to create a central intelligence who, like the speaker of Mauberley, was involved in society; however, James himself has been referred to as a "passive spectator" in his personal life (MoHJ XXX). Beach refers to him as a man who lived his life through "the passionate reconstruction of the lives of imaginary beings [but in doing so, he had] greater freedom in invention and manipulation of the elements of story" (MoHJ XXXV). The speaker of Mauberley, like James, indicates an attempt at being a passive

spectator---though he himself influences the opinions of the readers---because he does not actually interact with the other characters until "Siena Mi Fe; Disfecemi Maremma," dedicated to Monsieur Verog; the speaker had "found" Monsieur Verog "engaged in perfecting the catalogue." The speaker is found again interacting with Mr. Nixon in the poem by that name. In "Mr. Nixon" the speaker tells the reader that "Mr. Nixon advised me kindly, to advance with fewer/ dangers of delay. 'Consider/ carefully the reviewer.'" By the nature of the conversation with Monsieur Verog and the advice given by Mr. Nixon, the reader understands that the speaker is "a man of letters" and therefore has an "interest in [the] literary phenomenon," as Beach suggests of James' central intelligences.

Beach also suggests that "often, as in The Figure in the Carpet, [the speaker] has some little axe of his own to grind" so that the character becomes "the interested observer, the actor himself" (MoHJ 69). The tone of Mauberley is, without question, like that of one who has an "axe to grind." Though unnamed, the speaker becomes involved as "interested observer" and "actor" when he provides not only commentary on the age but also criticisms, some direct and some indirect. Like the indirect approach of James, the imagist poetry of Pound allows him to create a direct treatment of a subject. Pound's method for direct treatment reveals the impressions of the speaker rather than a purely objective or representative observation. Lines such as the following indicate that the speaker's impression of the arts in his age is that of cheapness, a wholesaling of creativity in order to mass produce

with little thought of the quality of "alabaster" that will
outlast their generation:

> The "age demanded" chiefly a mould in plaster,
>
> Made with no loss of time,
>
> A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster
>
> Or the "sculpture" of rhyme. (SP 62)

The artists neglect, too, the "'sculpture' of rhyme" in favor
of sing-song rhythm "with no loss of time."   The reference to
"no loss of time" serves two purposes, as do many of Pound's
phrases; on the one hand, it is a commentary on mass production
of the arts and, on the other, a criticism of the too-regular
rhythms of Romantic iambic pentameter meters so well accepted
in the nineteenth century.

Pound seasoned his poems with many bitter herbs to allow
the reader to know that he was being given a concrete, though
not objective, observation. Like James, who surrounded his
characters with details, both of attire and scenery, to convey
indirectly the tone of the novel, Pound also uses the indirect
approach. After all, Pound himself had explained that he
wanted to condense the James novel.

The allusions of the poem are Pound's means of indirect
treatment which replace the endless, cobwebby sentences that
James used most often with his indirect approach. To show the
speaker's impression of the "cheapness" of his society, Pound
chooses to contrast Caliban and Ariel, Caliban as the example
of gross ugliness being chosen by society instead of Ariel.
The beauty of art is being replaced by "a tawdry cheapness
[that]/shall outlast our days."

Pound's use of allusions is closely related to James'
dramatic scene. What James achieves with the multitude of
details in scenes that "light" his central intelligence or
subject, Pound achieves through allusions both classical and
contemporary. He would insist, like James, that his speaker
have a fine intelligence which would, for Pound, include
knowledge of the classics. Pound does with one allusion what
it might take James chapters to do.

The classical allusion to Capaneus, for example, is used
in the "Ode" as synonymous for E. P.:

>   No, hardly, but seeing he had been born
>
>   In a half savage country, out of date:
>
>   Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;
>
>   Capaneus; trout for factitious bait. (SP 61)

The significance of Capaneus is his identity as

>   one of the seven captains who warred on Thebes. As
>
>   he scaled the walls of Thebes, Capaneus defied Jove
>
>   to protect them. Jove replied with a thunderbolt
>
>   that killed the blasphemer with his blasphemy still
>
>   on his lips. (I 132n)

Dante has the Poets encounter Capaneus in The Inferno, Canto
XIV, where they find him still blaspheming God even in his
torment, in the same sense that E. P. is still "bent resolutely
on wringing lilies from the acorn" (SP 61). The allusion
reveals in one word the personality of E. P. and the trials
that came upon him as a result of defying social demands.
References to the perilous journey relate to E. P.'s life as a
long journey on which he attempts to find his "Flaubert."

The allusions are additions to the dramatic scene but the poem in its entirety is structured like the Jamesian scene and "picture." James used the alternation between the two to intensify his theme and to develop the character of his central intelligence. In the scenes James reveals his character in social situations. The character acts or reacts usually in a manner that is socially acceptable. Fleda Vetch in The Spoils of Poynton, for instance, performs according to proper Victorian English social expectation when in the company of rich socialites at Poynton. To intensify the pressure that compels Fleda to conform, James creates concrete details of environment, actions, and dialogue that accurately represent Victorian traditions.

When Fleda is away from Poynton, particularly in her father's and sister's home, she becomes a more independent, free-spirited woman and speaks her feelings more readily. The device James uses in Spoils to make a movement away from the Victorian or Romantic novel to the modern psychological novel is found in his summaries (or "pictures") of Fleda. Although Fleda conforms to society and to Mrs. Gereth's wishes when at Poynton, her thoughts and actions during the summaries when the reader is allowed to know what she is thinking and feeling are the antithesis of social conformity. James' juxtaposition of Fleda's actions and feelings is the basis for the theme of the kind of personal bondage brought about by social pressures or the "demands" of an "age."

Pound uses a similar technique in the "Siena Mi Fe'; Disfecemi Maremma" poem, in which the reader has a sense of

being present in a dramatic scene. The poem is a recollection
of the speaker's conversation with Monsieur Verog:

> For two hours he talked of Galliffet;
> Of Dowson; of the Rhymers' Club;
>
> Told me how Johnson (Lionel) died
>
> By falling from a high stool in a pub. (SP 66)

The "scene" gives Pound an opportunity to place his speaker
within the literary society of England and to provide a social
criticism simultaneously. Like James, Pound uses scene to
stress the inequities of the speaker's society, a society made
up chiefly of "pickled foetuses and bottled bones" who were
"engaged in perfecting catalogues" rather than in the creation
of fine art. The literary society, thinking Lionel Johnson to
be intoxicated, took him apart or "privately performed" an
"autopsy" to determine the source of his literary demise, thus
indicating that the literary society of England would not be
able to tell the difference between intoxication by alcohol and
the "pure mind." The reference to Lionel Johnson's death by
"falling from a high stool in a pub" is like the death of
Elpenor in The Odyssey; Elpenor fell from his watch while
drunk. Johnson, however, was not drunk from alcohol but
perhaps from "trying to embrace a moon" (SP 39).

Pound praised Johnson in the preface to Poetical Works of
Lionel Johnson for his knowledge of "tradition, the narrow
tradition, that is, of English, Latin, and Greek. This
intelligent acquaintance with the past differentiates him from
the traditionlists of his time, and of ours" (LE 368). Pound's
reference to Lionel Johnson's actual sudden death, which did

not allow him "time to put his house in order" (LE 369), is
also a parallel to Elpenor's cry from the dead for a proper
burial; for Lionel Johnson it was a cry for understanding and
acceptance. The parallel between Johnson and Elpenor also
holds the theme of social misunderstanding and rejection that
began in the "Ode" pertaining to E. P. (SP 61).

The ironic dramatic monologue of Mr. Nixon is also
effective as a Jamesian device (SP 67,68). Henry James allows
his characters to reveal through their monologues many
inconsistencies within themselves as well as in their society.
Similarly, Pound, through the character of Mr. Nixon, gives us
in condensed fashion the nature of the arts and the attitude of
many of the artists in the "nineties."

Mr. Nixon's advice to "consider/carefully the reviewer"
indicates that he is more interested in pleasing the reviewer
than in creating fine art. The irony enters when Mr. Nixon
remarks that as a beginning artist he "was as poor as you are."
He remains poor in respect to art; in the selling of his talent
for profit, the artist becomes a prostitute. It is not
difficult to see that Mr. Nixon thinks he has manipulated or
"butter[ed]" the reviewers to get to his position, but in fact,
it is he who has been manipulated.

The speaker is advised by Mr. Nixon to "take a column/
even if you have to work free," although he neither works for
free nor is he free to work. His advice to "give up verse"
because "there's nothing in it" and because "no one knows at
sight, a masterpiece" is an indictment against the superficial
art-prostitute who fails to "see" the value of a work of fine

art and is a revelation of the society's attitude toward
"verse." Pound's own attitude toward much of the Romantic and
Victorian poetry, the "pseudo-glamours and glamourlets and
mists and fogs" (LE 297), was due to what he called shallowness
or softness. In these stanzas he indicates the end results of
the demands of the age on both the artist and society. Art
that lacks depth or hardness could scarcely be considered art.

The "friend of Blougram's" who advised the speaker to
conform to society uses the Biblical phrase "don't kick against
the pricks" to indicate the futility of going against the
demands of the age. In addition to being a warning to the
speaker, Mr. Nixon's comment that the "nineties tried your
game" in this stanza echoes the failure of Henry James'
dramatic period in the nineties.

In poem XII the speaker is again in a social situation,
this time the drawing room of Lady Valentine (SP 69). The
images in the first stanza indicate the speaker's commentary
on the "fluff" of the scene: the entrapped female, "Daphne"
attempting to free herself, but "subjectively," and the
"stuffed-satin drawing-room" reminiscent of James' dramatic
scenes in which most of the ironic actions take place in
drawing-rooms. There are several words in this poem which
create the atmosphere of the shallowness and softness which
characterized the drawing room of nineteenth century English
society: "coat" (i.e., superficial covering in addition to the
garment intended), "doubtful," "border of ideas," "uncertain
edge" referring to the "moulds in plaster," and "classics in
paraphrase" of poem II. The choice of words for this scene

reveals Pound's attitude toward art that is superficial,
lacking in durability or "hardness."

Besides the language in the dramatic scenes, Pound uses
the alternation of scene and summary as a "basic structural
feature. . .conceived dramatically" (EF 10). The seeming shift
in subject or theme between the poems, in addition to the
alternation of scene and summary, parallels what Walter Isle
refers to as "James's dialectical principles." Although Pound
uses very little actual dialogue, his shift in subject from
poem to poem achieves the tone of James' dramatic scenes. In
Experiments in Form Isle states that the

> conflict[s] between characters, themes, and
> structural patterns as a process equivalent to
> thesis, antithesis, and synthesis---bring about a
> careful, balanced generation of the action and
> development of theme. 'Balance' is the key word, for
> this is what finally gives the novels an artistic
> form as well as an organic sequence. Analyses of the
> overall structure. . . [illustrate] dialectical
> patterns and . . . other recurrent structural
> patterns, some derived directly from the drama, such
> as a tendency for the action to fall into phases or
> 'acts.' (EF 11)

Pound, as stated previously, carries James' idea of form still
further by the introduction of allusions for intensity. He
also uses in a Jamesian way a structural pattern in Mauberley
involving action that tends to "fall into phases or 'acts.'"

Pound's "picture" or summary in Mauberley is often

reminiscent of James'. Isle states that James' experiments
with scene and summary are the major reasons for the
"involutions and obscurities" of James' later style; he also
suggests that the balance between the two devices "is an
essential part of the texture and even the form of the novels"
(EF 11). In Mauberley, too, the movement of the speaker's
consciousness through various aspects of life contributes to
the unity and, therefore, becomes the essential theme,
particularly if one analyzes Pound's possible intention for the
parenthetical subtitle of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley in the 1926
edition of Personae: "(Life and Contacts)." The movement
through various aspects of life also distinguishes Pound's use
of personae in his past work from the consciousness of his
speaker in Mauberley. In Mauberley the speaker is doing more
than making statements; he actually moves among people,
experiences the circumstances of his era, and, like James'
characters, is "sensitive to the feel of the place or to the
tonality of the person" (LE 306).

John Espey dismisses the subtitle, "(Life and Contacts)," as

bits of baroque plasterwork for Mauberley's facade,
of use when the sequence originally came out as a
separate book, or later, as an independent section of
a book with its own title page, but of little further
significance than this. (EPM 94,85)

A comparision of James' philosophy of art and life with that of
the nature of the speaker's experiences in Mauberley uncovers
perhaps a motive for using the subtitle that makes "(Life and
Contacts)" yet another key to understanding Pound's "study in

form" and condensation of the James novel. When reading Henry James, one can scarcely ignore the wide view of life depicted in his novels.

In theory James would open art to all of life in order to filter that life through the "powerful and original" minds of the writers" (ALC 72). James' perception of life involved a

> world as it stands [that] is no illusion, no phantasm, no evil dream in the night; we wake up to it again ever and ever; we can neither forget it nor deny it nor dispense with it. We can welcome experience as it comes, and give it what it demands, in exchange for something which it is idle to pause to call much or little so long as it contributes to swell the volume of consciousness. In this there is mingled pain and delight, but over the mysterious mixture there hovers a visible rule, that bids us learn to will and seek to understand. (ALC 73)

In his critical writing, James' remarks about distrusting critical formulas are directly related to his belief that the "interest and value" of a novel provide a "direct impression of life," and life is diverse and constantly changing.

James was more concerned with how his character behaved in society and the effect that society had on him than with the development of a character that would fit any specific, static mold or stereotype. Most of James' characters are what Pound called "bibelots" (LE 300), decorated by him to portray human moral and psychological complexities of people who might respond in particular situations. James had been criticized

for never having been "down town," but, as Pound argues, "a butler is a servant, tempered with upper-class contacts" (LE 301) in James' novels.

By moving his speaker among the people and circumstances of his society, Pound creates an embodiment for his theme. The speaker, by way of allusions and images, is less a composite or decorated character than a distinct personality, even though he is unnamed. The speaker's movement through social situations is an imitation of James' recording of events that Pound states "closely . . . corresponded to an external reality" (LE 302). His novels were histories "of a personal sort, social history well documented and incomplete, and he put America on the map both in memoir and fiction, giving to her a reality such as is attained only by scenes recorded in the arts and in the writing of masters" (LE 302). Similarly, the speaker of Mauberley records the social, artistic, political, and religious temperature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In the Mauberley summaries, the reader becomes privy to the speaker's opinion of his society through Pound's choice of "language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree" (LE 23). Revealing lines such as the reference to those who gave their lives "for an old bitch gone in the teeth, /for a botched civilization . . . / for two gross of broken statues,/ for a few thousand battered books" are scathing criticisms very different from James' more subtle commentaries. James' criticisms are intended as scathing, but his style allowed him to spin out and interweave his criticism with great subtlety.

This is understandable, since the novel is an unfolding of theme unlike poetic devices that require concise concrete images to facilitate the arrival at conclusions quickly. Many critics of _Mauberley_ refer to the poem as obscure, but the cancerous attitudes criticized by Pound's speaker certainly are not obscure.

Both James and Pound stressed the use of "charged language," although each used detail in a distinctive manner. James' theory of the wide view of life and the stretching of images, the interweaving of them throughout the stories, is sufficient evidence for the failure of James' dramatic period, since effective drama requires conciseness much like poetry. In James' novels, the significant details provide organic unity to the scene and are integrated into the form of the complete novel. Significant details are to the James novel what allusions and imagism are to the Pound poem.

In _The Spoils of Poynton_ James chooses patent-leather for the shoes that Mona Brigstock kicks up in front her as she walks. The shiny, reflective shoes afford James a detail that reveals Mona's conceit, her need for attention, her superficiality, and her lack of "taste." Likewise, the same patent-leather shoes mirror Owen Gereth's dependence on Mona, his domination by her, and his struggle to please her when in her presence. Mona's shoes, like Pound's choice of the word _carton_ in the "Yeux Glaques" poem, carry a great deal of weight and provide for a thematic layering that extends beyond the surface implications.

Neither James nor Pound confine their choice of details

to concrete objects but often include abstract ideas. James,
for instance, refers to Fleda Vetch as being "dressed in an
idea" in the opening scene of Spoils, referring to the attitude
that attracts Mrs. Gereth to her as a prospect for Owen's
savior. In typical Jamesian fashion, this detail is ironic
because Fleda lacks proper breeding; she is a would-be artist
who comes from common stock, and her background contrasts with
that of those who attempt to use her. In the descriptive
detail, James reveals Fleda's detachment from society, her free
spirit, and her possession of a plan which might help her
dependent friends who are trapped in tradition. Being "dressed
in an idea," like so many details in James' novels, goes
unnoticed until it is incorporated with other details to
provide the organic unity.

In like manner, the significance of Pound's details and
images in the poem might easily be overlooked by a critic who
is preoccupied with annotating the many allusions. The
handling of details, concrete and abstract, is the genius of
Mauberley, especially since Mauberley is composed of summaries
and impressions of the speaker rather than scene and dialogue
as in the novel. Pound did not "dress" his characters; he
"undressed" them by the manner in which he referred to them (e.
g., "foetid [foul smelling] Buchanan").

Pound's and James' contrasting methods for developing
themes through use of detail reflect the obvious difference of
genre as it influenced the form of the completed work,
controlled, of course, by the style of the individual artist.
Henry James believed that a theme ought to be dramatized rather

than explained; his novels testify to that belief. The
elaborate details in the settings, the contrived circumstances
in the scenes, and the gestures and clothing of characters were
developed for the express purpose of dramatizing his theme:
the abusive society and the individual struggle for freedom.
Pound's condensation through images and allusions which present
"an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time"
(LE 3) created drama that he felt was more powerful and
immediate than the massive rhetorical style of James.

The lengthy complex sentences that James used were in part
the cause for the rejection of the novels by the American
literary society who were too lazy to reach below the surface
(LE 304). In his condensation of the novels' themes, Ezra
Pound used concise words and names that were two or three
layers deep, each layer strengthening the form upon which the
poem is built. Furthermore, his choice of historical
characters, like Rossetti and Burne-Jones, helps him to achieve
density in that they perform double and sometimes triple
duties. Since Pound did not think that their work needed to be
done over (or imitated), he allowed their work to speak for
him. Perhaps the best example is the Burne-Jones painting,
King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid, which not only provides a
literary allusion but a visual one as well. The same is true
of the many adaptations he uses throughout the poem, such as
the Ronsard's title "De l'Election de son Sepulchre" from Odes,
IV, 4 which Pound uses to write "his own epitaph, revealing
both his critics' view of his career and his own view of it" as
Espey suggests (EPM 85).

In _Ezra Pound's Mauberley,_ John Espey says that in condensing the James novel "Pound has stripped back a few covering layers and has stated more openly than the original what lurks in the deeper levels of James's text" (EPM 52). While this may be true on the surface, nothing could be further from the truth for the sensitive reader. If anything, Pound has actually succeeded in burying the theme deeper with these images, allusions, and allusions within allusions which are more intensely significant. Pound is unquestionably blatant in his attack on nineteenth century English society; however, for the sensitive reader and the art critic, the various levels of interpretation in _Mauberley_ provide an endless number of possibilities for further enjoyment of the poem as a work of art which goes far beyond the surface social criticism. His condensation of the James novel refers not only to stating "more openly" but also to the condensing of the weight of James' theme into "charged" though not necessarily obvious language. Except for a few articles and prepositions, every word in _Mauberley_ is "charged" with the principles of the imagist poetry set down by Pound.

What Pound accomplishes through his condensation of the James novel in _Mauberley_ marks the beginning of Pound's mature style, culminating in _The Cantos,_ the epic poem which carries imagism to its ultimate conclusion. Nowhere in the series of poems of _Hugh Selwyn Mauberley_ is that maturity more obvious than in the "Yeux Glauques" poem. For some as yet unknown reason, most critics pass over the poem and miss the richness of its treasures. Edith Sitwell in _Aspects of Modern Poetry_

simply states that she "find[s] it the least interesting poem [in Mauberley]" (AMP 192). F. R. Leavis in New Bearings in English Poetry writes only a brief summary (short paragraph) of the conflict between Buchanan and the pre-Raphaelites. Both he and Sitwell develop lively interpretations of other portions of Mauberley but ignore the richness of "Yeux Glauques."

In the first five poems, Pound addresses the problems of his present age, the cold, hard materialism of the machine age. "Yeux Glauques" seemingly calls an abrupt halt to the reflections on the present for a digression to the nineteenth century. He sets the stage for the poem in the first stanza by contrasting the Victorian moralists with the pre-Raphaelites and poets like Algernon Charles Swinburne, whose poetry was criticized for its sensual imagery and immorality. In his first "scene," Pound chooses historical characters for the images that move the poem, unlike the ficticious characters of the James novel who needed further development within the work.

William Ewart Gladstone and John Ruskin represent the moralist artists in opposition to the pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who had also been an associate of Swinburne. Gladstone, in addition to being a liberal statesman whose literary work included classical studies on Homer, was reputed to be a crusader for the redemption and rehabilitation of prostitutes. His moral crusade probably earned him respect in society as well as a not-so-honorable mention in "Yeux Glauques."

Swinburne and Rossetti belonged to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which was a group of artists dedicated to pure

art, not in the moral sense of purity, but in the direct
expression of the real. Purity, pushed to the ultimate limit
by the Brotherhood, consisted of the representation of "real"
things, people, and events (i.e., leaves, trees as they appear
to the eye, people in their natural surroundings, and concrete
images to convey mythological and romantic themes). While the
Brotherhood shared the common goal of purity in art, each
artist expressed purity in his individual style, yet another
reason for their inclusion in the poem. Pound was concerned
with the freedom of new expressions of theme rather than mere
imitations of the old.

Rossetti, the leader of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood,
depicted traditional themes with elements that produced human
rather than divine qualities, resulting in a demythologizing of
humanity. In his religious paintings, he included scenery of
the period of history for the subject; he painted the Virgin
as a young maiden in a setting more naturally related to her
humanity than her divinity. Rossetti's poetry, too, has
qualities less Romantic and more earthy and real. Pound refers
to "foetid Buchanan [lifting] his voice"; Robert Buchanan was
the author of the critical essay "The Fleshly School of
Poetry," in which, under the pseudonym Thomas Maitland, he
attacks the Brotherhood, in general, but Rossetti, in
particular, for his poem "Jenny." In a recanting after the
death of Rossetti, Buchanan criticized him for using "amatory
forms and carnal images to express ideas which are purely and
remotely spiritual. . ." (OC 142). "Jenny" happened to be one
of the poems that was recovered from Rossetti's deceased wife's

casket; he was so overwrought by her death that he had buried it with her. This perhaps symbolic act on the part of Rossetti gives rise to questions as to other motives Pound may have had in chosing Buchanan's essay. The essay is an example of the "abuse" of the Brotherhood in that Rossetti had resurrected the poem, and Buchanan attempted to bury it again.

Other questions aside, it is enough at this point to say that Pound included references to "Jenny" because of its subject matter: prostitutes as cheap substitutes for the "real thing." The poem is about a man who spent an evening with a prostitute; he leaves in the morning after spending the night in meditation on the shame of the prostitute and the "lust" that had ruined her but, more importantly, on his own shame as an artist for being manipulated by an age that made demands on him.

Later in Mauberley, Pound creates sympathy for Jenny's or the art prostitute's "bewilder[ment]" that the "world/ shows no surprise/ At her last maquero's [pimp's]/ Adulteries." Prostitution of art and of humans was a common theme for Rossetti and the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood was attempting to redeem prostitutes by representing them in art as victims of society, caught in a vicious cycle. Buchanan and others like him resisted the sensual manner in which they did it, calling it evil, while at the same time Gladstone's passion for saving prostitutes was "still respected." Dante Rossetti had actually used the theme as an expression of his own feelings of being "pimped" by his critics. His poetry and painting were his means of working through the bondage created by the critics and

society in general.

The actual use of the name "Jenny" in the poem is an allusion within an allusion. Rossetti uses the quotation (which Pound paraphrases in Mauberley "Ah, poor Jenny's case") as an epigram in his poem. It is quoted from Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor (AS 486). In Act IV, Scene I of Shakespeare's play, a student is being questioned about the genitive plural case of hic, haec, hoc to which he replies, "Genitive,---horum, harum, horum." Mrs. Quickly, an ignorant bystander, misunderstands him to have been speaking of a whore named Jenny, "Vengeance of Jenny's case! fie on her! never name her, child, if she be a whore." Besides Rossetti's epigram, several assumptions could be made here regarding the importance of the allusion to the scene. First, and perhaps most important, is the snap judgment Mrs. Quickly made about what she "thought" she heard, paralleling the narrow-minded Buchanan and other moralists who misunderstood the identity of the real whore; second is the implication that whores should not be named (exposed); and finally there is the matter of prostitution in the allusion that carries the theme of the "Yeux Glauques" poem. Considering the layering of images, the allusion to Rossetti and his poem enables Pound to convey not only the social antithesis to the individualism of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood but also the prostitution of art in a broader sense that is imposed on artists by a society which judges too quickly without regard to the consequences to art.

One of the most obvious examples of the density of images in "Yeux Glauques" is the eye imagery. The "glauques" in the

title is derived from French and Greek words that mean dull,
glaring. Pound saw the nineteenth century as dull and vacant,
like the eyes of the beggar maid in the Burne-Jones painting;
the Romantic and Victorian artists have society
"rhapsodize[d]"---"rhapsody" here implies the deception of
English society. Pound states that

> the British public . . . likes and always will like
>
> all art, music, poetry, literature, glass engraving,
>
> sculpture, etc. in just such measure as it approaches
>
> the Tennysonian tone, . . . the lady-like attitude
>
> toward the printed page. (LE 276)

The eye imagery in the poem is also Pound's vehicle for
revealing a society that demands answers of artists like James
(and himself) but approaches the artist's answers with a "thin,
clear," . . . "vacant gaze." Society is, instead, mesmerized
or "rhapsodize[d]" by the art-prostitutes who bind it in the
tradition of the nineteenth century. The Burne-Jones painting,
King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid, is used by Pound as an image
of the art-prostitute whose eyes (narrow vision, vacant ideals)
have convinced society of her validity.

The model for the Burne-Jones painting, referred to in
"Yeux Glauques" as having a "faun's head," is believed by some
to be Elizabeth Siddal, wife of Dante Rossetti in whose casket
was placed his controversial poem, "Jenny." Beyond the actual
model, though, others believe that Aphrodite was Pound's
intended "faun" because of her ability to deceive her victims,
but the half-man, half-beast mythological creature could also
apply to Siddal because her eyes had been painted as those of

saints, prostitutes, and goddesses by many of the
Pre-Raphaelite painters. In King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid,
Burne-Jones depicts the beggar maid with the face and eyes
which could be those of a saint (the Virgin) or a goddess
(Aphrodite). In either case, Pound uses the painting to
strengthen the theme of art prostitutes (beggar maid) being
passed off as good art while the pure art is being bound,
abused, and rejected.

     The interpretation of the allusion could be carried a step
further by close visual examination of the painting. The
beggar maid is positioned within a cage-like (carton) structure
that also appears to be a throne. She is elevated while the
King sits at her feet. The King is wearing armor but is
sitting in a position of servitude with his weapons placed to
the side. The two young figures above the structure, possibly
symbolic of artists who refuse to be deceived by society's
distractions, are oblivious to the beggar maid and the King.
Because of the servitude of the King to the beggar maid and
various other elements of the painting, Pound's allusion to the
painting allows the visual image of the painting to do his work
for him (ATA 772).

     It is noteworthy that the painting itself alludes to the
1842 Tennyson poem, "a modern reworking of an ancient and
popular ballad" (ATA 770). The last lines read as follows:

          So sweet a face, such angel grace
          In all that land had never been.
          Cophetua sware a royal oath:
          "This beggar maid shall be my queen!"

Pound's careful selection of words also allows him to wring all substance from their meanings. The choice of the word "carton" rather than cartoon, for example, is rich with implications. Every meaning and derivation of the word adds a new dimension to the poem: Burne-Jones not only paints ("cartons") the beggar maid, but he also preserves (cartons) her eyes, satirizes (cartoons) the art-prostitute, and physically contains (cartons) her figure in the cage-like structure within the painting. Had Pound used "cartoon," the contemporary or surface reader might not reach further for the intended interpretations.

Another example of Pound's careful selection of words is the use of "still." The word "still" is used five times in the "Yeux Glauques" poem; nowhere else does it appear with such frequency. He uses it in a variety of ways. The first implication of the word "still" in the first and third stanzas is that, even though Pound is speaking of the past, the abuse has been carried over into the twentieth century. In the first stanza he uses it to intensify the continuing, yet immoveable, attitude of the literary society in respect to Gladstone and Ruskin and in abuse of Swinburne and Rossetti. The use of "still" in the third stanza implies both the stillness of the eyes and the continuance of the influence. Also, the placement of the word adds a pounding rhythm to the poem; the initial inversion of "still" in line 11 and 18 is more forceful than in other places. In line 18, the "still" refers to the "gaze" of the maid, reminding the reader, even without seeing the painting, that the gaze of the maid, though "vacant," has the

ability to deceive and that the maid remains unshaken in her purpose. In the fourth stanza, Pound refers to the "English Rubaiyat" as "still-born," which means that the work was dead before it lived. Pound uses "still" here to mean lifeless.

The "charged" images, allusions, allusions within allusions, and the presence of literary historical characters are orchestrated in the "Yeux Glauques" poem of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley to represent the kind of density and complexity of meaning of which Pound was capable in poetry, thus an example of how he achieved the condensation of the James novel. Taking the James novels as his "germ," Pound has succeeded in draining the "last drop of suggestion" out of them by his "charged" images. The primary element of the James novel that Pound imitates for his condensation is the Jamesian "center of consciousness" or "central intelligence." Despite arguments to the contrary, Pound's use of the unfolding of the consciousness of the unnamed speaker achieves the autonomy of the artist, the psychic distance, often sought by James and many of the modern writers who came after him.

The similarities between Pound and James in the matters of theme, point of view, and the use of significant details accommodate Pound's intention for Mauberley, while the contrasts in style provide the challenge: taking James' convoluted syntax and condensing it into compact poetic diction without sacrificing the intensity of the social criticism created by James in his forty-plus volumes. The variation in the poems indicates Pound's attempt to incorporate many of James' "germs" into the theme of the poem. Pound's poem,

though covering a variety of social elements, achieves organic unity in the same way that James does in the entirety of his works via the controlling theme of personal bondage brought about by social and individual pressures to conform.

While he surely _condenses_ the James novel, he creates a work that takes volumes to interpret--an idea Ezra Pound would not find objectionable considering his passion for teaching. His poetry, thus, becomes a source for the sensitive reader to enlarge his understanding of all that Pound believed was important.

Conclusion

Upon completion of his Henry James essay, "Baedecker," and in keeping with his own belief that experimentation and imitation were the basis for creating new art, Ezra Pound created Hugh Selwyn Mauberley as "an attempt to condense the James novel," a testimony to his zeal for the revival of the "dead art of poetry." Critics of the poem for the most part either ignore or are ignorant of Pound's remark concerning Henry James. The few critics who link James and Pound do so in terms other than the formal elements of their work.

The multiplicity of concise language, allusions, borrowed quotations, foreign phrases, and the variety of subjects in Mauberley naturally open the poem to many interpretations apart from the relationship of James to the poem; the very fact of the confusion over the identities of E. P. and Mauberley should, however, give rise to the necessity of understanding that relationship. There is very little mention in the published letters and essays of Pound besides the remark in the Schelling letter concerning his intention for Mauberley. Pound, unlike James in his Prefaces, gives greater freedom to the reader's interpretation.

Judging from Pound's essay on behalf of Henry James, we can conclude that he held James in highest regard among nineteenth century artists for his experimentation and innovations, his daring attempts to go against the demands of the age. There are elements of the formal devices with which

James experimented found in <u>Mauberley</u> in addition to intriguing social and literary commentaries on the age in which James worked. In the essay, Pound recognizes James as a herald of artistic freedom; he takes an objective look at the immense body of James' work in order to stimulate interest in his work. Ezra Pound as teacher was an advocate of those who he felt deserved attention. His chief complaint about James' style was the convoluted sentences, a problem James himself found annoying. Most of James' later period was spent in the search for more concise means of conveying his theme.

Pound felt the answer to James' convoluted syntax was a knowledge of the Classics. Pound demonstrates this theory through his own employment of classical and contemporary allusions in <u>Mauberley</u> which enable him to create an array of thematic images that, when interpreted by the serious reader/critic, can speak volumes though encased in concise poetic diction. While James depended on his reader's discovery of his theme through the process of vision, Pound depended on his reader's knowledge of denotations and connotations of language and of the Classics. The primary difference in their styles of revelation had much to do with the importance each artist placed on time and history. Pound accepted James as a great writer despite their difference in style, but he feared the rejection of the voluminous contribution of James to the nineteenth century because of society's obsession with "pretty embroideries" and "Tennysonian tone" that caused the "lazy" reader to overlook James' greatness.

Pound used his own style to convey James' theme; however,

he did experiment with several elements of the James novel: point of view, indirect approach, dramatic scene, and significant details. The Jamesian concept of the "central intelligence" is the chief element with which he experiments. This device dominates the poem, yet critics of the poem have neglected to realize the implications regarding a valid interpretation that stem from the point of view of the poem.

James constantly experimented with point of view in order to achieve autonomy and to provide a cohesive link between various elements of the novel. The use of the central intelligence allowed James to speak through the intelligence of one of his characters, to see through his eyes, and to experience life as he experienced it. Therefore, the identity of the central intelligence is of primary importance to the understanding of the novel. The same is true of Pound's poem. Most critics make reference to the identities of E. P. and Mauberley but fail to mention the main speaker or intelligence which informs the poem and gives unity to the various individual poems.

The various individual poems that seem fragmented thematically are drawn together by the observation and experience of the speaker. The realist view of life shared by Pound and James provides for art that pertains to all of one's life. Since the poem's main theme is corruption in art and society, it follows that the experience of one central speaker would include the many facets of Pound's poem: the social demise of a potentially great poet; the anxiety of struggling artists; the prostitution of art by artists who sell out to the

demands of the age; the horrors of the machine age; the futility of war; and the suppression of artists by an insensitive society. The use of the central intelligence provided unity in James' fiction, and Pound made it work for poetry.

It is apparent that Pound never intended for Mauberley to be a central intelligence primarily because he is not present throughout the poem nor does he inform the poem; rather, the speaker comments on Mauberley's society and his work as he does on other artists within the poem. This social commentary or criticism apparent in Mauberley is the thematic link between James and Pound.

Pound wrote to Margaret Anderson that "the James and De Gourmont members are six month's work each. And I do not want to sink wholly into criticism to the utter stoppage of creation. ETC" (L 191). It is conceivable that Mauberley provided not only a means of rectifying what he felt were "irrelevant, non-aesthetic, non-literary, non-technical vistas and stricture" (LE 331) in the James essay by transforming the essay into poetry but also provided the inspiration for the artistic endeavors that followed the James and De Gourmont essays. Since he had spent so much of his time and creative energies on the essays, it is natural to assume those energies would not be put to rest easily but would become a "germ" for whatever Pound gave birth to.

Because Hugh Selwyn Mauberley is regarded by most critics as a great poem, I suggest that Pound could echo the words written by Henry James after his experience with drama:

I take up my 'own' old pen again--the pen of all my old unforgettable efforts and sacred struggles. To myself--today--I need say no more. Large and full and high the future still opens. It is now indeed that I may do the work of my life. And I will. (EF 19)

And he did; he managed to convert his "infinite little loss...into an almost infinite little gain" (EF 38). Using the inspirations gained from working with the James novels to fan the flames of creativity, Pound, no less than James in his later period, achieved a greater maturity as a poet with the creation of Mauberley. Pound, like James in The Awkward Age, "brought to full artistic expression his vision of English life, a vision finally and almost totally damning" (EF 203).

To analyze all of the parallels between Pound and James found in Hugh Selwyn Mauberley could amount to a James novel, but the evidence shown thus far is a sampling of what might be accomplished by examining Pound's stated purpose for the poem, that of experimenting with form and condensing the James novel. One important aspect of beauty in a work of art is its elusiveness. The artist always brings more to the work than he intends; the form of the work lends itself to a multitude of interpretations; the beholder, also, brings to the work a complexity of pretexts that shape his experience of the work. These aspects of art harmonize to give a work of art a life of its own. This is not to say that a work of art can mean anything anyone chooses it to mean. The artist works within a given set of rules, the work exemplifies the form of those

rules, and the beholder responds to and makes judgments of the work based on its form. There is much debate over the aesthetic judgments of art, but, in the final analysis, the beholder who is edified or delighted by a work is the best judge of its success. Therefore, as a beholder I celebrate the success of Ezra Pound in condensing the mighty oaks of the Henry James novels into an acorn, an acorn awaiting the germination and fruitfulness yet to be born in the fertile soil of all those serious readers and art critics who come after.

Guide to Abbreviations

GP	A Guide to Ezra Pound's "Personae"
I	The Inferno
MoHJ	The Methods of Henry James
P	Paideuma
OC	Oxford Companion to English Literature
EPM	Ezra Pound's Mauberley
ATA	Gardener's Art Through the Ages
LB	Lost Bearings in English Poetry
EF	Experiments in Form: Henry James' Novels 1896-1901
AoN	The Art of the Novel
SoP	The Spoils of Poynton
NB	New Bearings in English Poetry
VoS	Ezra Pound: The Voice of Silence
LoEP	The Letters of Ezra Pound
LoMP	The Language of Modern Poetry
LE	Literary Essays of Ezra Pound
SP	Selected Poems of Ezra Pound
ALC	American Literary Criticism
AS	The Annotated Shakespeare
AoMP	Aspects of Modern Poetry
PoEP	The Poetry of Ezra Pound: Forms and Renewals

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