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***GENRES AND HISTORICAL FORMS OF THE LITERARY  
IMAGINATION TODAY:  
A PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE APPROACH***

**Keywords:** *the experimental generic repertoire; objective correlative; mise en abîme; dramatization; dramatic monologue; historicity; retro-modernity.*

**Abstract:** *The article looks at the generic repertoire of the experimental oeuvre of the moderns through T. S. Eliot's theory and practice of banning emotion, creating objective correlatives but foregrounding a masked voice. The role of the masked voice in the architecture of The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock and The Waste Land is to both concentrate and conceal emotion. We start from here to explore the presuppositions of T.S. Eliot's voice dramatization and argue that the lyrical fourth part of The Waste Land is in fact self-reflexive in so far as it has a mise en abîme function and is the overall poem's objective correlative. After assimilating these two key terms for defining the generic repertoire of the 20<sup>th</sup> century experimental literary form, we cast a look at the past and the future of the experimental idiosyncratic texts. Following the path that leads from the dramatic and fictional mask to what Freudians call dramatization and literary critics have always known as irony, we note that in the background/foreground play of the speaking voice there are unexpected continuities and correspondences within and among the modern traditions. First there is continuity between the most experimental texts/artifacts of English high modernism (called monads by Northrop Frye) and the 19<sup>th</sup> century dramatic monologue. Next, the English-speaking reverence for the objective correlative in poetry corresponds to the French love of the mise en abîme technique. Because we find quite normal the continuation and increase in post-modernism of the self-reflexive strategies of literary expression and of the need to speak through masks, we extend the observations of the continuities/correspondences noted to make a wider scope proposal. We suggest that in the specific sector of aesthetics retro-modernity can replace the more general historical or typological terms that place late, later and post- in front of modernity, to create distinctions that maybe exaggerate the historicity of the modern aesthetic mind and practices.*