

## Exploring the Dynamics between Objective Correlative and the Law of Attraction

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### Abstract

This paper aims to delve deep into the intricacies of two seminal theories i.e., objective correlative and the law of attraction. The primary focus of this work is to bring forth the similarities between the two and also to unravel the dissimilarities. Additionally, it attempts to highlight the dimensions where these fit in and to what extent the law of attraction substantiates the use of objective correlative.

**Keywords:** intricacies, seminal theories, objective correlative, law of attraction, substantiate

*Hamlet and His Problems*, the much-acclaimed essay by T.S. Eliot drew instant attention attributable to its famous statement censuring *Hamlet*, one of the masterpieces by Shakespeare, as an “artistic failure” (2). The critic states in the essay that “the play is puzzling, and disquieting as is none of the others.” Nonetheless, Eliot went to the extent of remarking that the author “has left in it superfluous and inconsistent scenes which even hasty revision should have noticed” (2). Though Eliot considered *Hamlet* as an interesting play, however the reason for these charges lies in the fact which reckons Shakespeare’s work to be devoid of something essential.

The grounds of Eliot’s criticism are not apparent at once. The reader needs to plunge into deep waters to understand the missing stroke, and once the endeavour is made, it is understood that the psychological hint of mother’s guilt has not been dealt with. Mr. Robertson opines:

[Hamlet's] tone is that of one who has suffered tortures on the score of his mother's degradation ... The guilt of a mother is an almost intolerable motive for drama, but it had to be maintained and emphasized to supply a psychological solution, or rather a hint of one. (Eliot 3)

Moreover, Eliot affirms that the play lacks the desideratum of expressing emotion in literary work i.e., objective correlative, the very term was first brought to light by the poet and painter, Washington Allston, in 1840s in his *Lectures of Art*, particularly, in the *Introductory Discourses*. As per his perception the term implies "the process by which the external world produces pleasurable emotion" (Roy). Eliot posits that it is a quintessential means of expressing emotion. He believes that it is vital to have "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that "particular" emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked" (XU 66).

Indeed, objective correlative is a premier way of vocalizing the psychological state of a character in a piece of composition. Rather, it is a fundamental art of literary work. It is a pivotal instrument of literature that unravels the emotional state of characters in the play by means of an image or may be by way of recurrent events. Eliot remarks, "The artistic 'inevitability' lies in this complete adequacy of the external to the emotion" (3). Presence of this tool is strikingly evident in *Macbeth*, particularly, in exhibiting the guilt-stricken state of mind of Lady Macbeth, a driving force in the death of Duncan. She is the perpetrator of regicide, who goads Macbeth to it. Eventually, she loses her sanity and this is indicated through the imagery wherein she, incessantly, washes her hands, as she perceives them bloodied.

It is quite important for an employed objective correlative to evoke parallel emotions in the mind of the reader. The absence of the same may be said to be indicative of the failure of that objective correlative. Eliot himself depicts striking prowess in the application of the same in his poem: *The Love Song of J.Alfred Prufrock* which skilfully brings to light the dark picture of grim loneliness in modern life through following lines, "Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels/ and sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells" (Roy).

The argument that there is a verbal formula for a given state of emotion - well coincides with a phenomenal doctrine, popularly, known as the law of attraction. It is a belief that emphasizes the idea of 'pure energy', to the extent that man and his thoughts are energy. Further, it stresses the notion that "a process of like energy attracting like energy exists through which a person can improve their health, wealth, and personal relationships" ("Law of Attraction"). Prentice Mulford has remarkably said, "Every thought of yours is a real thing - a force" (Byrne 4). As per the law of attraction every minuscule experience that is occurring in one's life is actually attracted by us. It all depends on the way one thinks, the images one holds in one's mind. This evidences the phrase 'it's all in mind'. Harvard psychiatrist, Dr. Srin Pillay, has laid scientific grounds that aid one untangle the way the

law of attraction works in one's life. Numerous books have elucidated this law. The most popular among them is by Rhonda Byrne named *The Secret*, wherein the author states:

Everything that's coming into your life you are attracting into your life. And it's attracted to you by virtue of the images you're holding in your mind. It's what you're thinking. Whatever is going on in your mind you are attracting to you.

Researchers on the law of attraction have firm belief that observations have potency to affect the particles in the sense that a photon of light from one's eyes heat up the particles that are projected on them. This well parallels with the theory of quantum physics. There are scholars who reject this claim. Despite the conflicting opinions, the law of attraction remains in force. To make it work, the experts of the theory have suggested certain techniques that help elevate one's vibrations to a level that one actually starts believing in its existence and make it happen to oneself by attracting 'like energy'. One of the well-known strategies is practising positive statements, called affirmations - the verbal formula that helps you manifest your desired object by rehearsing positive statements. This verbalization magnifies your conviction and the universe reciprocates it by delivering the same to you. Where affirmations induce things to manifest in real life, objective correlative works in literary creations to manifest the emotions of the character to the reader. It rather cuts open the psychological orbit of the character by means of symbols, imagery or any other literary device. Objective correlative rather broadcasts the emotions of literary character and helps the reader to have a better understanding of them. Many a time, authors manifest what goes in the mind of the character with the help of drawing parallel with the occurrences in Nature. Numerous times, the happy state of mind of the character is indicated using rains in the backdrop or with the setting of beautiful landscapes. Alternatively, the sad or negative psyche is brought forth by gloomy weather conditions. This, undoubtedly, grants more than casual background. For instance, in Carson McCullers' *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*, Cousin Lymon's entrance highlighting his promising role in Amelia's life is evident from the following lines:

It was toward midnight on a soft quiet evening in April. The sky was the color of a blue swarm iris, the moon clear and bright. The crops that spring promised well and in the past weeks the mill had run a night shift.(Webster 5)

In *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, McCullers reflects the grim and isolated psyche of the protagonist by using the imagery of dilapidated houses and deserted streets. In this work, the change of seasons notably parallels John Singer's restlessness. His wanderings are well reflected in the narrative with the description of winters:

The town had not known a winter as cold as this one for years. Frost formed on the windowpanes and whitened the roofs of houses. The winter afternoons glowed with a hazy lemon light and shadows were a delicate blue. A thin coat of ice crusted the puddles in the streets, and it was said on the day after

Christmas that only ten miles to the north there was a light fall of snow.(Webster 168)

Dr. Joseph Murphy, the author of bestseller - *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind: Unlock Your Master Key to Success* affirms that every minuscule event or occurrence is a direct result of what a human being believes in or thinks about. He states “All your experiences, events, conditions, and acts are the reactions of your subconscious mind to your thoughts.” (Murphy 19). This validates objective correlative that literary connoisseurs employ in their work in order to reveal the psychic state of the characters in the work. The amplification of character’s feelings is predominantly achieved through objective correlative. Charles Haanel explains the science behind the law of attraction which in turn evidences objective correlative:

The Universal Mind is not only intelligence, but it is substance and this substance is the attractive force which brings electrons together by the law of attraction so they form atoms; the atoms in turn are brought together by the same law and form molecules; molecules take objective forms and so we find that the law is the creative force behind every manifestation...” (Byrne 156-157).

This is what makes man the most powerful transmission power. Therefore, the myriad aspects of one’s life depend upon the way an individual uses that power, positively or negatively. The chaos and confusions that prevail in human mind is attributable to the misconceived notion that every individual is a separate entity and everyone endeavours to fulfill his/her own needs and desires, which indeed create mess in the universe. The truth as believed by the experts of law of attraction remains that even if we cannot see through our naked eye, we are all connected by the God element that breathes in all of us, the element that connects the human to the Supreme. Scientifically, if required, to put, “it is just one energy field” that exists, as stated by John Assaraf (Byrne 162). This remarkably proves the use of literary devices to magnify the character’s emotions by creating a setting which adds to the sublimity of the literary work and let the reader comprehend the character in a better way. “The object in which emotion is...bodied forth is its external equivalent or objective correlative” (Prasad 236). In order to transmit emotions from the mind of the author to the mind of the reader, it is quintessential to incorporate objective correlative. It rather helps in proper visualization as well on the part of the reader. Nevertheless, whatever exists around us is just an extension of ourselves, be it the occurrences in the Nature or be it the events around us. “The predominant thoughts or the mental attitude is the magnet, and the law is that like attracts like, consequently, the mental attitude will invariably attract such conditions as correspond to its nature.” (Byrne10)

To conclude, it would be apt to quote the words of Dr. Murphy that law of attraction “is a universal truth” and “whatever you impress on your subconscious mind is expressed on the screen of space as condition, experience, and event” (18). It works in real life in manifestation of things depending upon the mental makeup of an individual. Objective

Correlative, on the other hand, grants realistic expression to the characters and events in a literary piece of work. At the same time, it helps unveil the psychic state of the character to the reader. In a way, objective correlative is the microcosm in order to depict emotions of the character in a literary composition, whereas, law of attraction is the macrocosm of the dynamics in real life. It goes a step forward and justifies the incorporation of objective correlative in literary works.

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