

Q. Objective correlative

Ans: T S Eliot used this phrase to describe "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion" that the poet feels and hopes to evoke in the reader (Hamlet, 1919). There must be a positive connection between the emotion the poet is trying to express and the object, image, or situation in the poem that helps to convey that emotion to the reader. Eliot thus determined that Shakespeare's play Hamlet was an "artistic failure" because Hamlet's intense emotions overwhelmed the author's attempts to express them through an objective correlative. In other words, Eliot felt that Shakespeare was unable to provoke the audience to feel as Prince Hamlet did through images, actions, and characters, and instead only inadequately described his emotional state through the play's dialogue. Eliot's theory of the objective correlative is closely related to the Imagist movement.

In fine, The theory of the 'objective correlative' is undoubtedly one of the most important critical concepts of T.S. Eliot. It exerted a tremendous influence of the critical temper of twentieth century. What Eliot may have had in mind was that the emotions of poetry should be provided with motives, or that the responses of the poets should be responses to a defined situation.