

## **Charles Lamb's essay 'Dream Children' is a mixture of autobiographical elements along with romantic memoirs, emotions, and binary of humour and pathos.**

Ramen Goswami  
Magadh University, Bodh Gaya  
(English Department)

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**ABSTRACT:** *Lamb's essays are as diverse as the very individual nature. Lamb's 'philosophical heart' finds a story in the whole thing that he saw or qualified. In fact, from the time when Bacon, essay had been used as a medium to give appearance to the writer's judgment and ideas on matters of universal interest. But Lamb did not find pleasure in expressing his reflection methodically. His themes are recommended by sudden flashes of imagination. As a matter of fact, his essays are his self revelations. It is his own likes and dislikes—prejudices and arguments that find position in the essays. Lamb's extremely personal style, evolved out of 'a movable sally of the mind', is full of elegance and attraction. The writer assumes the companionship of his readers and creates a sense of connection with them.*

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Date of Submission: 03-06-2021

Date of Acceptance: 17-06-2021

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By 'humour', we usually mean amusement associated with compassion. It is in this feature that humour contrasted with lampoon which is savage accusation of a personality, or a group of person or a race or a people. In Lamb's essays humour is not far away from sadness. Obviously, lamb's humour is accurately called 'rainbow humour' because it is a fusion of hilarity and suffering.

Charles Lamb's life is a chronicle of constant mourning or agony. He had to give up his schooling in order to bear the responsibility of his family by functioning as a clerk in East India Company and later in South Sea House. He exhausted the fair-haired years of his life in the irritating imprisonment of an office. He used to work similar to a slave in the office and even at night he was depressed the gift of Nature, sound sleeps. Otherwise, he had to bear the encumbrance of keeping his sister, Mary Lamb. Lamb, who had a craving for family life was forced to remain a celibate lifetime. Lamb's mental form seems to be similar to that of the Duke Senior who proclaimed "Sweet are the uses of adversity" ("As You Like It").

In *Dream Children*, comedy and pathos are juxtaposed in a way that one cannot be divorced from another. The whole idea is fantastical in the intellect that Lamb was forced to live by the heaviness of state of affairs, the life of a celibate. The tragedy manifests itself when he fancies that he is a dowager with two children John and Alice. This reveals the bottomless yearning of Lamb for family life. He fancies how the two children crept close to him to beg him to tell them the tales of Lamb's early life, his Norfolk Palace and the grandma Mrs' Field. We are told how the position where Mrs. Field dwelt in the great residence in Norfolk was seen of the 'cruel death of the children' by their gluttonous uncle. Funniness is noticed in the way how the 'wood' upon the chimney piece on which the whole tale was coiled is pulled down by a foolish rich person "to set up a marble one of modern invention instead of no story upon it".

On occasion, humour takes upon a mocking tone but it is never far away from pity, while Mrs. Field lived she kept up 'the dignity of the house' but it came to perish afterwards. The stupidity of the rich owner is brought out when he exposed the 'old ornaments of the house and set in the owner's other house' where they look ill at ease in the sense if someone set the marble memorial of old tombs in responsibility drawing room. By hearing that Mrs. Field was a great performer in her youth, the dream daughter "Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement". Likewise, when John heard that Mrs. Field was intrepid even when she believed that 'the apparition of two infants was seen gliding up and down the staircase near where she slept'; John 'expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous'. Similarly, when John heard that his father desisted from plucking peaches, nectarines, oranges, he cunningly deposited back upon the plate, a feast of grapes.

The altitude of the mixture of hilarity and pity reached at climax in the final phrase of the essay. Unbroken pathos is manifest in the narrative of the courtship of Alice-WN for seven years duration. The surprise of enduring separation of John and marriage of Alice-WN with another person are too profound to be expressed in words. The way, the dream breaks up separating Lamb alone in his spinster arm chair attended by the sister Bridget is a proper loan of humour and pathos, signifying that life is a 'pendulum of joy and sorrow' or 'life is a tale told by an idiot...full of sound and fury signifying nothing'. (Macbeth)

Subjectivity is a fraction and package of romanticism. It is said that Lamb made English essay a writing style defy part of romantic lyric. He has rightly implemented in his essays, the aphorism; "say, I to myself, say I". In *Dream Children*, there is an extraordinary revelation of the deep tragedy and misery of his personal life. In a slow and stable space of morose melody, he tells his dream children about their mother, his long love relationship with her and about his brother John Lamb. But at the far end, the dream breaks up leaving the essayist alone in his bachelor arm chair. The sudden shock of reality is surcharged with sorrow, for the children are but the symbols of the authors' desire for family life. All these ascribe a romantic aura or personal fragrance to his essays.

Romanticism is said to be an flee from the real life around into the crease of segregation. But it is related with personal monologue. Lamb is often accused to have an escapist approach. With his mind Lamb creates before our eyes in the essay *Dream Children*, the big quiet building with its huge stairway and dark forlorn room, the statues of Roman Emperor' and the good-looking gardens with flowers, fruits and garden's smells and fishes rousing in the pond. The entire tone of the essay is yielding, depressing and wishful. He recalls the reminiscences of his brother 'John', his grandma Mrs. Field and his beloved Alice WN. All through the essay Lamb introduces gentleness and flees from the cruel reality refereeing to the children who are vision children and not real ones.

The use of the ideal balance of pleasure-seeking and religion is another trait of Lamb's essays. The Hedonism in this world, the name of 'Alice and John' at last transformed into Spirituality. The sense of immobility is another characteristic trait of Lamb, where he says; "In gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Caesars, that had been emperors of Rome till the old marble heads would seem to alive again", or "I be turned into marble with them".

The beat of the essay is sufficiently modulated to the paternal charm of the thing. The living description of the mansion reminds one of the medieval castles in Keats' poem. The vivid nostalgia of fruits, fishes and fresh grass is almost Wordsworthian. The sublime artistry of the close with Elia waking from his reverie and finding Bridget by his side is like Coleridge's dream vision. That is why the essay reads like a passionate lyric.

From the Essays of Elia the full life of Lamb may be reconstructed. His essays are profoundly 'personal and autobiographical'. In numerous well-known essays, Lamb describes a variety of facets of his existence. For example, in *Dream Children*, he tells about his time of childhood at the Palace, in Blakesware in Hertfordshire, he describes his boyish days of fun and joyously, his holiday trips to the palace with his sister Mary, his revival from serious sickness and other various details of his life. Here, he gives full and living cinema of his relations—his brother John (James Elia) and his sister Mary (Bridget Elia), his lover Alice W-N(Ann Simmons) and his grandmother. Lamb is truly a 'visualizer of memories'.

Lamb had a turn for bewilderment. He delighted in weaving clothes of fiction in the mesh of truth. In many of his essays, he has distorted the names of persons and places. *Dream Children* is a beautiful specimen of mystification. The whole essay is the product of conjure. In fact, Lamb has such a sole gift of mingling fact and narrative that his figures taken from life become lacking feeling transformed into the immortal creations of a imp land.

As Saintsbury observes, "The style of Lamb is as indefinable as it is inimitable and his manner and method defy selection and specification as much as the fluttering of a butterfly." It is easy to notice chatty ease, epigrammatic depth, moving fervour, sparkling wit, moving pathos, deep in sight into man and etiquette, shy satire, wild fun and many other stylistic merits.

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Ramen Goswami. "Charles Lamb's essay 'Dream Children' is a mixture of autobiographical elements along with romantic memoirs, emotions, and binary of humour and pathos." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI)*, vol. 10(06), 2021, pp 42-43. Journal DOI- 10.35629/7722