

## Points for Tutorial Project - GE 2

### The Autobiographical elements in Charles Lamb's *Dream Children: A Reverie*

#### About the Author:

- Charles Lamb was born on February 10, 1775, in London. He was the youngest son of John Lamb and Elizabeth Field.
- He was a British essayist, poet, fiction-writer, and critic from the Romantic poet.
- His elder brother was John Lamb, Mary Lamb was his sister.
- He was educated in the Bluecoat Charity public school of Christ's Hospital.
- Actively associated with many literary associations such as Drury Lane theatre, he published his writings in many prominent literary magazines such as The London Magazine, The Reflector.
- He was deeply associated with many famous literary personalities such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth and P.B Shelley.
- **Add some points, mentioning some of his notable works.**

#### Publication of the Text:

- *Dream Children, A Reverie* is an essay from the collection of *Essays of Elia*. *The Essays of Elia* was issued serially in the 'London Magazine' in 1820 and was published in the form of a book, in 1823.

#### The Personal Life of Charles Lamb:

- In 1791, he temporarily joined in South Sea House as a clerk.
- He was appointed as a clerk in the accounts office of the 'East India Company' in April 5, 1792. He served the company for three decades till his retirement.
- In the age of twenty, he fell in love with Ann Simmons, but it turned to a hopeless love affair. Ann Simmons married Mr. Bartham. Eventually, after this disheartening frustration, he suffered from grave state of neurosis, following temporary insanity.
- Mary Lamb, his sister, lost her mental sanity and in a violent fit of insanity, she stabbed her mother, Elizabeth Field. Charles Lamb started to stay with his sister and took special care for her. During this time, Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb collaborated and published '*Tales from Shakespeare*' in 1807.
- Lamb's elder brother John Lamb died in November 1821, whose death was the occasion of the essay *Dream Children, A reverie*.
- **Add some other points of Lamb's personal life.**

### **Features of Autobiographical Essay:**

- Autobiographical essay is generally an individual's account of life, or an account of the series of events or incidents in a person's life.
- The author's personal experiences and recollections are revealed and expressed directly by the author himself.
- Autobiographical essay mainly reveals serious and truthful attempt of self study or memory.
- The autobiographical form reveals four different aspects that vary according to the mood and mode of auto biographer. The four aspects are: Subjectivity, Self-revelation, Introspection and self concealment.
- It is intensely personal, subjective, and records the trajectory of the subjective self, not objective and detached.
- The self of the author is at the centre. It is a never ending dialogue with the self. It involves a process of reconstruction of the writer's life. There is a conspicuous element of confession of the author meant for the readers.
- **Add some other features of autobiographical essay.**

### ***Dream Children: A reverie as an Autobiographical essay:***

- In this essay, Lamb talks of his own life, memories, personal joys and sorrows. He gives expression to his deep-seated yearnings, longings and agonies under the pseudonym of Elia.
- There is a harmonious blending of autobiography and fiction. At the same time, the essay is intensely personal as it faithfully depicts the real incidents of the author's life; on the other hand, he fabricates some events by his imagination consciously as to materialize his unfulfilled longings. He also fictionalizes his family members often with different names.
- Lamb takes his readers to be silent listener and confesses the secret fact of life in front of him. This self-revelatory approach and confessional tone mark Dream Children as an important trait of auto-biographical essay.
- He enters into the world of world of fantasy and weaves stories of his personal life in front of imaginary children, Alice and John. He relates to his childhood days of Mrs. Mary Field, his grandmother and John Lamb, his dear brother who has passed long ago. His brother is portrayed as John L.

- He recalls the fond memories of his childhood days- his days at the Norfolk mansion with his Grandmother Maryfield, the beauty of the fruit laden garden of oranges, peaches, nectarines and the vast yew trees, the attachment to his brother, John Lamb. John Lamb was a spirited youth and won admiration from all.
- He recollects fond events of the past when his uncle carried him in his back when he cannot walk in pain, his courting of Ann Simmons (Alice W.) in happy times whom he could not marry in reality.
- The nostalgic memories of his real life brother John Lamb and his grandmother, Mary Field haunt him, who have deceased. Mrs. Field succumbs to cancer and John Lamb died in early age. Death, suffering, and separation strike a deep rooted pathos in this essay.
- Bridget refers to his own sister -Mary Lamb, John L refers to his sympathetic elder brother John Lamb, great grandmother is Mrs. Mary Field who is very kind, religious and respectable woman and house keeper of Norfolk mansion, Alice W. refers to his real life beloved Ann Simons who married Mr.Bartram, a pawnbroker, Bartrum refers to Mr. Bartrum, John and Alice are the supposed children of the author and Ann Simmons, whom the author imagines.
- **Illustrate the memories of the author with everyone from the text in a detailed manner with textual quotation.**
- **Mention the autobiographical elements found in Charles Lamb's other essays such as Superannuated Man.**
- As an autobiographical essay, Dream Children projects the author's own life in its fullest expression.

#### **Conclusion:**

- Lamb materializes his own unfulfilled desires through the medium of autobiography, but at the end he becomes conscious of grim reality and the whole story appears to be a mere illusion, a day dream. He is again thrown back into reality with his own faithful sister, Mary as his only companion.
- John and Alice are not his own children; they are merely figments of imagination, as he could not marry his beloved Ann Simons in real life.
- Charles Lamb holds the spectrum of both cheerful memories and unmitigated agonies of the heart, tormented by the unrequited love with Ann Simmons.

