CHAPTER I
CHARLES LAMB: THE MAN AND HIS STYLE

The thesis entitled "Dramatization of 'self' in the Works of Charles Lamb" is an attempt to understand how, where and why Lamb's "self" is revealed in his works in general and in his essays in particular. Lamb's works include some poems and dramas but it is through his essays that Lamb is most known to us. It is, therefore, not improper to confine the thesis to his essays mostly, though the "self" as revealed in his poems and dramas has not been overlooked.

However, before any attempt is made at analysing his essays to study his "self", it would be proper if a brief description is provided of the development of the essay from the earliest to the times when Lamb took the reins of the essay writing process. Also it would not be out of place, in the context of the present thesis, if a description is provided of "self".

First the essay: what it is and its development. The development of the essay can be traced back as early as the fifteenth century.

The term essay means an attempt. It is regarded as a composition, comparatively short and it is something incomplete and unsystematic. It is a picture, not a narrative or a thesis. Johnson clearly defines an essay:

  a loose sally of the mind, an irregular, 
  indigested piece, not a regular and 
  orderly performance.
The Oxford English Dictionary definition runs thus:

A composition of moderate length on any particular subject, or branch of a subject; originally implying want of finish, 'an irregular, indigested piece' (J.), but now said of a composition more or less elaborate in style, though limited in range.²

However, it may be mentioned that both these definitions of essay are vague and too narrow to cover all essays, so called, especially, the ones written by Charles Lamb. Lamb's essays are the best examples in English, as Montaigne's are in French.³ It is in this context that Alexander Smith describes an essay as:

a literary form, (that) resembles the lyric, in so far as it is moulded by some central mood -- whimsical, serious or satirical.
Given the mood, and the essay, from the first sentence to the last, grows around it as the cocoon grows around the silkworm.⁴

It is this mood which is central to an essayist's dramatization of "self", for in the whimsical, serious and or the satirical mood of the essayist lie the inner feelings, thoughts and emotions which form part of one's self.

The prose in general but the essays in particular of the fifteenth century are of small account. Latin attracted most writers of the period. In this century, Sir Thomas Malory is the one great prose-writer who finished his Morte Darthur in 1470. His style is simple, even monotonous but rich with
archaism. The prose of the century was still unformed. A standard form of English essays did not appear until the next century.

The sixteenth century's Renaissance was a European phenomenon. In England the Renaissance affected literature slowly and consequently brought in a liberation of thought, the revolt against papal authority and a new perception of beauty in the Greek and Latin classics. The use of Latin is significant in Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) and Bacon's (1561-1626) works such as *Utopia* (1516) and *Novum Organum* (1620). Tyndale's (1484-1536) and Coverdale's (1488-1568) New (1525) and Old Testaments (1535) are the striking examples of English prose which is simple though archaic. Fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, archaism and latinism may perhaps be responsible for archaism and latinism in Lamb's works. To quote Lamb:

What is become of the winged horse that stood over the former? a stately arms! and who was removed those frescoes of the virtues, which Italianised the end of the Paper-buildings?\(^5\)

The use of archaic and Latin language provides a foundation to the prose of the seventeenth century.

The Elizabethan prose was known for intellectual liberty, comfort and unbounded patriotism. A peculiar, difficult and rather insincere style of literature which was fashionable in England in the sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The taste for buffonery and caricaturing could be found in Nashe's
(1567-1601) picaresque novel *The Life of Jack Wilton* (1594). Dekker (1570-1632), showed a sense of proportion, of outline and of form in his work *Guls Horne-booke* (1609). Hooker (1554-1600) was for religious literature. Essays also grew somewhat philosophical and moral. Bacon, the father of English essays, was known for pithy and aphoristic utterances compact with thought and practical wisdom. Burton (1577-1640) was given to brooding and melancholy. His *Antatomy of Melancholy* (1621), exercised a kind of fascination, and in the nineteenth century, Charles Lamb took to brooding. For example, this from "The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers":

> James White is extinct, and with him these suppers have long ceased. He carried away with him half the fun of the world when he died -- of my world at least. His old clients look for him among the pens; and, missing him, reproach the altered feast of St. Bartholomew, and the glory of Smithfield departed for ever."

In the Puritan age, there was a religious movement which started in Europe in the sixteenth century leading to the establishment of Protestant churches. John Bunyan (1628-1688) was for spiritual independence. Browne's (1605-1682) prose showed sonorous grandeur of style, it was heavily latinized and rhythmical in form. Taylor (1613-1667) gave spirited defence of the Anglican church. Fuller (1608-1661) was known for his lively style, overflowing humour, anecdotes and illustrations. The literature of this period is somber in character; it saddens rather than inspires us. It had become critical and intellectual:
it makes the reader think, rather than feel deeply.

In literature of the Restoration period in England following the return of Charles II as King in 1660 -- there was sudden breaking away from old standards and checks of Puritanism. Dryden (1631-1700) was the champion of the Restoration period. His works exhibited the good and evil tendencies of the age. Samuel Pepys (1632-1704) was known for his diary. The literature of the time showed realistic tendency, the study of facts and of men as they are. The following extract from "The South Sea House" proves the influence on Lamb of that age:

This was once a house of trade - a centre of busy interests. The throng of merchants was here -- the quick pulse of gain -- and here some forms of business are still kept up, though the soul be long since fled. 7

The Restoration period ultimately culminated in the age of Queen Anne. This age is known for understanding and enlightenment. This new age rejected fancy and wanted reason for its guide. It wished to understand not to imagine. To the age of understanding and enlightenment belong Swift (1667-1745), the satirist; Addison (1672-1719), the essayist; Steele (1672-1729), the original genius of the "Tatler" and the "Spectator"; Johnson (1709-1784), the dictator of English letters for nearly half a century; and Boswell (1740-1795), the creator of the immortal Life of Johnson (1791). An example of reason is sufficient to show the influence of the age of Queen Anne on Lamb: 

READER, would'st thou know what true peace and quiet mean; would'st thou find a refuge from the noises and clamours of the multitude; would'st thou enjoy at once solitude and society; would'st thou possess the depth of thy own spirit in stillness, ... — come with me into a Quaker's Meeting.  

The matter-of-fact, realistic, logical, and reasonable approach of the essayists of the Restoration and Queen Anne's age gradually started irritating the minds of Romantic Revivalists. So a conscious and deliberate break with their predecessor's ideology could be observed in the works of prose writers like Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Coleridge (1772-1834). Besides these two Lamb (1775-1834), Hazlitt (1778-1830), De Quincey (1785-1859) and Leigh Hunt (1784-1859) were some remarkable writers and critics of this period, who produced so much excellent literature that the age is often called the second creative period, the first being the Age of Elizabeth.

They, for example, had the following traits of romanticism: imaginative, visionary, remote from experience, passionate, fantastic, dreamy, picturesque, inclining to grandeur, preferring irregular beauty to perfect beauty of proportion and subordinating form to matter. They were evocative rather than descriptive. Their works represent subtleties, delicacies of emotion, loves and hates, mysteries and undoubted intellectual universe. Something of the Romanticists can as well be traced in Lamb. For instance in "Blakesmoor in M -- Shire": 
It was an old deserted place, yet not so long deserted but that traces of the splendour of past inmates were everywhere apparent. Its furniture was still standing — even to the tarnished gilt leather battalions, and crumbling feathers of shuttlecocks in the nursery, which told that children had once played there. But I was a lonely child, and had the range at will of every apartment, knew every nook and corner, wondered and worshipped everywhere.\(^9\)

Once the development of essay through various ages and the influence of the latter on Lamb has been explored in brief, it is proper to know something about "self", especially in the context of the thesis concerned.

In the present research work the notion of "self" does not include the conception of soul, as in modern psychology the notion of "self" has replaced earlier conceptions of the soul. "Self" is understood as a conscious individual aware of his identity in all his changing experiences.\(^10\) It is further understood as an individuation process by which the true self (self — same or identity) emerges as the goal of the whole personality.

Self has been variously understood and interpreted in terms of the psychological self, the religious/mystic self and the social self. These various types of self provide insights into a person's mental development, religious beliefs and social behaviour.
Linguistically this self is realized by the use of first person pronouns like 'I', 'me', 'my', 'mine'. These words have since the earliest times, been so common place yet lively enough that they have infused the psychologists with eagerness to understand others and others' personality and consequently through this understanding of others to understand their own self or their own personality. An example of Lamb's psychological self will be in order:

   I can here play the gentleman, enact the student. To such a one as myself, who has been defrauded in his young years of the sweet food of academic institution, nowhere is so pleasant, to while away a few idle weeks at, as one or other of the Universities.  

Lamb is considered a commentator, totally detached from his surroundings to an extent that at times it seems as if he did not belong to his age. This fact of Lamb's being an objective narrator can be accounted for by Christian mysticism. In the state of ecstasy, as described by Christian mystics, the sense of self and the world disappears; the soul is wholly absorbed in the consciousness of God or of God's creation. But there are other phases of mystical experiences found in Lamb:

   I like to meet a sweep - understand me - not a grown sweep - old chimney-sweepers are by no means attractive - but one of those tender novices, blooming through their first midgetude, the maternal washings not quite effaced from the cheek -- such as come forth with the dawn, or somewhat earlier, with
their professional notes sounding like the peep-peep of a young sparrow; or liker to the martin lark should. I pronounce them, in their aerial ascents not seldom anticipating the sunrise.\textsuperscript{12}

Such concepts, self-esteem, self-image, and ego-involvement have been regarded by some social psychologists as useful, while others have regarded them as superfluous. The origin of awareness of self has been studied in relation to the reactions of others and to the child's comparisons of himself with other children. Particular attention has been paid to the so-called identify crisis that is observed at various stages of life (e.g., in adolescence) as the person struggles to discern the social role that best fits his self-concept. In this context Lamb's ideas about the kind of treatment that he received from his brother and the kind of the one that he would have provided to his brother are a sufficient proof of a reflection of Lamb's social self. Consider for example:

and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy - for he was a good bit older than me - many a mile when I could not walk for pain; - and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; ...\textsuperscript{13}
To know Lamb - the man would be a fascinating study. It would not be out of place to mention that before knowing Lamb's early life - his childhood and boyhood, it is not easy to evolve the picture of Lamb as a man. His heredity and the early life will reveal how Lamb inherited above all things his chivalry and tenderness as a man.

John Lamb, Charles' father, published verses in the middle of the eighteenth century; his three children, John, Mary, and Charles, all had the trick of verse and also wrote prose with feeling. Being a clerk and steward by profession John Lamb and members of his family have distinguished themselves as a clever rhymer. Mr. Lamb was officially a "Scrivener", worked in the Inner Temple (which was and is one of the Law Colleges of London), and lived there in the service of the generous Samuel Salt.

John Lamb and his wife Elizabeth had seven children, three of whom survived to adulthood. John Junior was born in 1763, Mary Anne in 1764, and the last of the seven, Charles, on 10 February, 1775.

With an autobiographical note, Lamb opens his account in "The Old Benchers Of the Inner Temple" in a very captivating manner:

I was born, and passed the first seven years of my life, in the Temple. Its church, its halls, its gardens, its fountain, its river, I had almost said -- for in those young years, what was this
King of rivers to me but a stream that watered our pleasant places? - these are of my oldest recollections.  

This piece of Lamb's writing clearly exhibits his fascination and love for the place. Lamb was associated with the places of his birth - like church, its halls, gardens, fountains and rivers. He was not associated with these places in the manner an ordinary child could be. But he was intimately attached to these places. These places rendered food for his imagination. The surroundings of Lamb's birthplace played a significant role in moulding Lamb, the man, into admiring and adoring city life. Later in life, the city for him was at once a stimulant and an escape. The persons in the family - his aunt and his sister Mary played a key-role in shaping his mental calibre and enriching his imagination. The birthplace memory always remains with him. Although Lamb wrote later in life this particular essay and other essays also but he could give a very vivid picture of the place. It implies that birthplace memory ever haunts him.

At the time of Lamb's birth, his elder brother John was a scholar at "Christ's Hospital", the ancient school for fatherless or needy London children; he was therefore usually away from home. When he came, he was a self-centered youth, and it was to Mary that the child Charles looked for companionship, which was given with the greatest joy - despite the apparent age difference between the two. The understanding between the two endured as long as Lamb lived, and made their relationship impression felt through the written word of his own in the history of English Literature.
In the essay already cited, that is "The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple", Charles has given us a touching portrait of his father, the barrister Clerk, under the name of Lovel. After the narrative of Samuel Salt's especially the Bencher's careless lifestyle, Lamb concludes that he would have suffered if he had not found in his father a sincere and honest servant serving Samuel Salt. Lamb mystifies the readers by giving a faithful description of his father as Lovel in this manner:

Lovel took care of everything. He was at once his clerk, his good servant, his dresser, his friend, his 'flapper', his guide, stop-watch, auditor, treasurer.

I knew this Lovel. He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. ¹⁵

The household condition at the Crown Office Row was not well. While having a view of the whole condition, it seems that they were poor from the beginning. John Lamb, the elder, was the only bread-winner. Aunt of Charles, his father's sister, was one of the family members who contributed something to the common income. Charles's Aunt had a fascination for him. Their relationship is thus portrayed:

Someone else in No. 2 Crown Office Row was especially fond of Charles. Unexpectedly, he touched a soft spot in the heart of his eccentric Aunt Hetty. Turning away from her religious exercises, she began to take notice of him, engaged him in long conversations and fed him with cakes that she had baked for his pleasure. ¹⁶
Little Charles was sometimes afraid of Aunt Hetty when she was praying. The child Lamb suffered much from overpowering night fears. He was prone to fancy being often alone. It was more active because he was often alone. Even his devoted sister Mary had only limited time to spend with him. He had to amuse himself. This he did by telling himself stories, playing pretended-games of his own invention, making up delightful thrilling fantasies. He drew the material for these from any sources. Much of it came from books. He had read great many books, for Samuel Salt had a library and allowed the Lamb children to use it. Charles took full advantage of this. His nightly fancy was such that it took several weeks for Charles to convince himself that Aunt Hetty was not a witch.

Charles being the youngest in the family had hardly anyone to keep him company. Charles was thoughtful, home-loving, tender-hearted with delicate features. He had sprindly legs that made him walk weakly. He had a nervous-temperament like his sister. Only his sister Mary paid attention to him whenever she could spare some time. Mary was quiet and shy than Charles and far less fanciful. The age difference and Mary's nature could not prevent her to give him company. Moreover she took delight in his company. She sympathised with him in his joys and comforted him in his sorrows, played with him, listened to him, took him for walks, told him stories, read to him and taught him very early to read to himself.

Charles had the rudiments of his education from Mr. William Bird's academy. The school was a day-school for boys, and an
evening school for girls, thus, both of them had the advantages of its instruction.

In his childhood Charles used to visit the country to stay in Hertfordshire with his maternal grand mother Mrs. Field at Blakesware, where she was caretaker, or with his great aunt Mrs. Gladman at her husband's farm at Mackery End. Mackery End gave him his first glimpse of rural life. As Lamb says in the essay "Mackery End, in Hertfordshire":

The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End; or Mackerel End, as it is spelt, perhaps more properly, is some old maps of Hertfordshire; a farm-house, delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead.¹⁷

Charles's good-bye to Blakesware in the summer of 1782 may be considered as his good bye to childhood. Because after this radiant summer good bye Lamb was forced to divert his attention towards his studies and it was also the high time for his parents to think about his education and to send him to some good school. So after this period a full stop was placed to his childhood activities.

Lamb's father was very much anxious about his education within his limited means as his financial condition was not good. In his seventh year Lamb was being considered for a privilege both valuable and formidable. He was to leave his first simple school for "Christ's Hospital", which had equipped his elder brother for a safe job in the South Sea House. Mr. Salt was one of those good-natured men who have had a passion for enriching "Christ's
Hospital" and, as governor, securing education there for promising but needy children. The school had been founded by King Edward VI in the City of London during the Reformation; a monastery had been converted into a school; and the school had become a source of strength for the Church, the universities, the teaching institution, and above all the Commercial City. Lamb might even become a captain in the Royal Navy or enter trade if he was admitted. He was admitted, and "clothed" - in the blue coat and yellow stockings still worn by Christ's Hospital boys - on 9 October, 1782. His attainments were such that he was at once included in the senior school, a mile or less from home; at the same time one Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from distant Devonshire was sent there.

Lamb's experiences of school life are imbibed in his essay, entitled "Recollections of Christ's Hospital", published in 1818, and the sequel to it, called "Christ's Hospital Fire and Thirty Years Ago" (one of the Elia's essays), published two years later. One must be acquainted with Lamb's love for mingling fact with fancy and masquerading if one wishes to understand the essay properly. The process to disengage fact from fancy has to be adopted by the reader to have a clear understanding when Lamb dramatizes himself in his essays "Recollections of Christ's Hospital" and "Christ's Hospital Fire and Thirty Years Ago". It would be interesting to know about the dress of the school. It is graphically described in this fashion:
In the autumn of 1782 therefore, and dressed in what had been the regulation dress ever since the school's foundation by the boy-King Edward VI in the Sixteenth Century - yellow stockings, white neck bands, leather belted, heavily-skirted dark blue gown - the seven-year-old Charles left home to spend the next eight years of his life as a Blue-coat boy. 18

Lamb refers that he felt and suffered the agony to witness the boys in dress and considered them as they were in 'letters'. He himself felt the terror after knowing the consequences if the prescribed uniform was not put on they would be put in 'bedlam cells':

I remember L. at School, writes Lamb, under the signature of Elia. It happens, very oddly, that my own standing at Christ's was nearly corresponding with his; and with all gratitude to him for his enthusiasm for the cloisters, I think he has contrived to bring together whatever can be said in praise of them, dropping all the other side of the argument most ingeniously. 19

In describing the character of Coleridge, Lamb takes the help of his charming quality of humour and mystification, and begins in the character of one, a boy having no friends and whose parents were away in Wiltshire, for whom his (Coleridge's) heart was ever yearning. Such is the way of Lamb's writing who twists the simple fact in the garb of mystification and humour. The friendless boy whose personality is thus pretended, was
young Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who had entered the school the same year as Lamb though three years his senior, Coleridge and Lamb were school fellows for the whole seven years out of their early association arose a friendship as memorable as any in English Literature.

In the character of Coleridge, Lamb goes on to relate, in the third person, many incidents of his own boyish life which distinguished him from his friends. Charles Lamb was not troubled how to get through a winter's day, for he had shelter and friendly faces within easy reach of the school:

... he had the privilege of going to see them, almost as often as he wished, through some invidious distinction which was denied to us. The present worthy sub-treasurer to the Inner Temple can explain how that happened. He had his tea and hot rolls in the morning, while we were battering upon our quarter of a penny loaf - our crug - moistened with attenuated small-beer, in wooden piggins, smacking of the pitched leathern jack it was poured from.  

It is Lamb's quality of writing that he pretends to mix the reactions of his friends in his own account that captivates his readers. This account clearly indicates how Lamb felt privileged in comparison to his other friends. It portrays a pleasant and gay side of Charles Lamb's life. Lamb's school years left a genial influence on his mind and spirit.

There was a very strict and tiresome routine for the boys of the "Christ's Hospital". During the period the regime was
severe. The boys had to be up at six in the summer and seven in the winter, followed by eight hours of work before bed, which was at seven for the younger boys and eight for the older. On Sundays they attended two lengthy services filled out with hour-long sermons during which they were vigilantly watched lest they should go to sleep.

In the school discipline was strictly observed. The class monitors, a group of tough boys, called King's Boys. The main punishment meted out to the boys have been flogging which was practised freely by the King's Boys.

Lamb had mixed feelings regarding his life at "Christ's Hospital". He was too sensitive a lad to undergo sufferings without having a strong impression on him, but he had to force the darker side of Blue-coat life comparatively rarely, hence it could never became a part of his personal experience. His circumstances shielded him from this rough side of "Christ's Hospital" life and instead he enjoyed the Blue-coat life fully. One of the fact that he lived in the same house where the school governor also lived, neither the boys nor masters dared to ill-treat him, lest he should complain about them.

Some of the distresses that children like Coleridge might feel in the strange and gigantic school, before they found their way in it, were narrated by Lamb in one of his Elia essays, but this was mainly an instance of his imaginative sympathy. He had long before summed up his own school days as "joyful". If the
daily routine of Christ's Hospital had been bitter to him, as
it apparently was to others, but he had his consolations to be
in the Temple at least twice a week. But he found Christ's
Hospital as romantic as the Temple, though less spacious and
flower-cultivated. Its cloisters alone were a noble antiquity.
The hall was noble, and its walls were hung with great pictures
of royal and other benefactors, still seeming to watch over the
destinies of their Bluecoat boys. If the diet prescribed was
not such as boys could call good, Lamb was not much concerned,
for his Aunt Hetty would soon be there with her basket of inte-
resting food from the Temple. It is not known that Lamb ever
met with the sharp violence that others aroused by misdeeds or
misfortune; he observed the tyranny of the upper grammar master,
Dr. James Boyer, and the toughness of the mathematical head,
William Wales, F.R.S., almost as an envoy from another country.
Here, it could be concluded, Lamb had good fate.

Coleridge was speedily selected by Dr. Boyer as a boy to be
trained for the University, and at that period Christ's Hospital
could foster only a few of them at a time. However often Cole-
ridge was thundered at and flogged, he remained to become head
boy of the school, and to be sent to Cambridge with an extra-
ordinary reputation. Boyer did not overlook Lamb, who was three
years younger, yet perceived the genius of his friend Coleridge.
Lamb was not of the same versatility, but he was a good classi-
cal scholar as far as his years allowed, and his English compo-
sitions were precise and sensible. It was a mystery to later
generations of studious Blues that Lamb had not been made a
Grecian but at the point when he might have been promoted, and
so set on the road to university career, some impediment appeared.
An impediment in his speech and the comparative poverty of his
parents forced him to turn away from "the sweet food of academic
institution" and follow his brother John out of Christ's Hospital
and into town life. Yet all through his town life something of
the collegian persisted in Lamb's outlook and spoke in his writings,
even if in a humorist's accents; if he had a perpetual sadness,
this disappointment after his exemplary studies at Christ's Hospital
was part of it.

Lamb was at the school from 1782 to 1789. Lamb tells us that
the Christ's Hospital boy's friends were commonly his friends
through life; and Coleridge was not his only reason for saying so,
nor was he thinking of his own circle only.

The contrast between the two chief classical masters who
taught in the old grammar school at Christ's Hospital amused Lamb
and his contemporaries. Lamb refers to his teachers Rev. James
Boyer and Rev. Matthew Field. Field was lenient man who permitted
his boys to lead their lives as careless as birds. They talked
and did what pleased them and nobody molested them. For Field
he says:

\[\text{Field never used the rod; and in truth he}
\text{wielded the cane with no great good-will}
\text{holding it 'like a dancer'.}^{21}\]
But on the contrary, Boyer was not so simple, he was full of terror. As Lamb says:

His pupils cannot speak of him without something of terror allaying their gratitude;
...

Lamb says that Mr. Boyer was an inspiring teachers. Homer and Catullus were for him living authors and they gave him happiness and was able to make his share that happiness also. He inspired them to read English Literature, especially Shakespeare and Milton. He inculcated in his pupils the desire to write themselves and if he liked, he praised them as promptly as he had beaten them when they had annoyed him. Lamb was the true pupil of Boyer who learnt much from him. Lamb forgave Boyer's beatings if he had received any for fostering his appreciation of literature. Lamb very humorously gives an account about J.B.'s wigs:

He had two wigs, both pedantic, but of differing omen. The one serene, smiling, fresh powdered, betokening a mild day. The other, an old discoloured, unkempt, angry caxon, denoting frequent and bloody execution. Woe to the school, when he made his morning appearance in his passy, or passionate wig.

So far we have looked only at the child Lamb in London, and some would take it (as he himself was apt to take this line) that he was absolutely a Londoner. But his mother's back-ground denied
this fact. Elizabeth Field was a village girl. In Hertfordshire even now there may be rural relatives of Lamb, and country comers where he once stopped could not be termed as townee. His grandmother, who was housekeeper at Blakesware House, a residence full of great charm, did not forget the Lamb children. Hence, before and during his Christ's Hospital days, Charles was often transferred to northward by Coach, away from the din on London, and into the country, into the sleepy great house and little Charles found himself in the midst of museum of relics and treasures of art, and its lawns, ponds and running waters. If he could, Lamb would take with him a school-fellow whose means were insufficient for his longer journey home. So Lamb was essentially a country child. His 'Blakesmoor' ever haunted him and later on this place continued the chain of his first experience. "From cloister to cloister" he passed from the Inner Temple to Christ's Hospital; and when he sought out the essence of his holidays in the country mansion that his grand mother had as if it were hers, things were much the same. His reflections after many years are Lamb's own, though offered as Elia's:

The solitude of childhood is not so much the mother of thought, as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those years, that, though there lay - I shame to say how few roads distant from the mansion - half hid by trees, what I judged some romantic lake, such was the spell which bound me to the house, and much my carefulness not to pass its strict and proper precincts, that the idle waters lay
unexplored for me; .... - So far from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, me thought, still closer the fences of my chosen prison; and have been hemmed in by a yet secure cincture of those excluding garden walls. 

Lamb did not need to go very far in order to betray himself, in another way, to anybody with eyes to see. After the death of Mrs. Plumer, the lady to whom "Blakesmoor" belonged, he must have written one of his first letters to his grandmother, inviting himself and friend to stay with her. The friend was a Bluecoat boy of quite an ability, at school the rival of Coleridge and afterward a man of wealth who delighted in his famous friends. To name him -- it was Charles Valentine Le Grice. He remembered how Lamb had persuaded him to "Blakesmoor", and how, excitedly he shown each nook and corner of the place. While taking round Lamb came across the harness that had been used for Mrs. Plumer's carriage. Le Grice (then growing old) recorded how Lamb had drawn his attention to it and to the fact that it was never to be used again, and added how much he had felt the seriousness of this communication from so young a boy.

In conclusion, a full portrait of Lamb emerges before us. Lamb as a child who loved playing, visiting places like - Church, gardens, rivers etc. and with this he takes leave from his childhood and devotes himself to his studies and school life. Lamb's school life experiences are very vivid, quite interesting and captivating. In school his personality was taking a particular
shape - growing into a sincere and serious type of an individual. His school days rendered him a very prize friend - Coleridge and their friendship was unique and lasting. At last he had to bid good-bye to his school days also where he felt at home and quite easy. To take leave from the school must be for Charles Lamb sorrowful. For Lamb it was both - he had to take leave from loved one i.e. - Coleridge, his friend, and loved place i.e. - "Christ's Hospital". He had an aptitude for higher studies. It was important for his family that without any further delay he should start earning his bread. There was poverty in his home and that could not be overlooked. There were deeper anxieties hereafter. The youngest child, Lamb, returned home to share the poverty and anxiety of the family. He had to atonce plunge himself into the wide sea i.e. sea of struggles of life for which he was still immature. It was rather too early for little Lamb to learn the life of sacrifice. But there was no escape. He had to face the realities of life. And he accepted those realities without a murmur throughout his life. This turns a school boy into prematurely Rusty-Boyman.

After going through the details of his childhood and school days, a very clear picture of Lamb as a man evolve before us. Although his circumstances were such that prematurely compelled him to bear the burden of manhood when he was just a grown up boy. That is why his title Rusty-Boyman suits him very aptly. Now the Lamb as a man is before us. His childhood and boyhood background dramatises before us his traits of personality as a man. He is
going to be honest, loving, humane, sympathetic, and serious looking kind of a man. He would be given to love and understand literature.

Above all, as a man he may be a poet, or essayist, or critic but he was a person - surpassing all the characteristics of his personality.

Lamb took the role of Rusty-Boyman prematurely without any grudge or murmur. That dramatizes his quality and worth as a person in his works.

Early in the nineteenth century there arose a new school of criticism which was guided by knowledge of literature, on the one hand, and the fear of God on the other. The latter element showed itself in a profound human sympathy - the essence of the romantic movement - and its importance was summed up by De Quincey when he said, "Not to sympathize is not to understand." These new critics, with abundant reverence for past masters, could still lay aside the dogmatism and prejudice which marked Johnson and the magazine editors, and read sympathetically the work of a new author, with the sole idea of finding what he had contributed or tried to contribute, to the magnificent total of literature. Coleridge, Hunt, Hazlitt, Lamb and De Quincey were the leaders in this new and immensely important development. The importance of the new periodicals, like the London Magazine, founded in 1820, could not be underestimated, in which Lamb, De Quincey and Carlyle found their first real encouragement.
Along with poetry and novel, new prose also developed at the same time. S.T. Coleridge formed the new spring for literary criticism with deeper philosophical outlook through his own Lectures on Shakespeare and in his work Biographia Literaria (1817). Keats wrote rarely but his writings were enlightened with critical thoughts. Byron's most serious piece of prose is one which he delivered in a form of speech in the House of Lords. It was against the death penalty for the workers. Leigh Hunt wrote continuously for more than thirty years, as an editor and essayist; and his chief object seems to have been to make good literature. William Hazlitt in a long series of lectures and essays, treated all reading as a kind of romantic journey into new and pleasant countries. He along with Lamb revived interest in Elizabethan literature, which so strongly influenced Keats's last and best volume of poetry. The wider literary interest of Lamb and De Quincey who were not simply critics of other men's creative efforts is fully reflected in their own delightful works which the world has remembered as the valuable contribution to Literature.

Three essayists of the period, Lamb, Hazlitt and De Quincey, have close links with the great romantic poets. Charles Lamb was at Christ's Hospital with Coleridge and remained a friend and admirer all his life; and he was a discriminating admirer of Wordsworth. All three essayists had a wide knowledge of literature. Lamb had a particular fondness for writers of earlier periods who were little known to his contemporaries. He was an unsuccessful dramatist who became known as an essayist only in
his middle forties. Inspite of obvious objections to giving extracts from plays, his anthology of passages from Elizabethan drama introduced them to many readers. Hazlitt's knowledge of past literature is apparent in his lectures on the English comic writers and on the poets, but still more in the echoes from his reading which occur on every page of his prose. He began life as a philosopher, and then failed as a painter; art and philosophy are two subjects about which he frequently wrote in his essays. He was also one of the best drama critic. De Quincey was an omnivorous reader, and he too wrote on philosophical topics.

Lamb and Hazlitt represent two different ways of the same type of criticism. Both are highly personal and element of autobiography runs through their writings. Their greatest common excellence is the power of pin-pointing what is unique in the books and authors in which they delight. Their criticism could be enjoyed when we are sharing their imaginative responses rather than of intellectual agreement to their judgements.

It is in their very different prose styles that these essayists show a complete break with neo-classicism. Lamb does not merely adopt the persona of Elia as a means of giving a series of personal confessions, as frank as Montaigne's, but he deliberately uses archaic words and constructions.

All the romantic writers were engaged in a rediscovery of the past, either as a subject of their poems, their prose, or their criticism, or as an influence on their style of writing;
and, in addition to their concern with the past, they were
fascinated with places remote in time and space. Even those
poets who disagreed with Wordsworth's views on poetic diction
avoided the stereotyped personifications and used a simpler lan-
guage than they would have done a generation before.

All the writers broke with neo-classical dogmas, sometimes
defiantly and sometimes not fully aware of what they are doing.
All of them used their works to express their own ideas and
feelings, which were often those of the spirit of the age, but
which met with considerable opposition from the conservatism of
the reviewers and of the reading public for which they catered.
All the poets, except Scott, began with radical and even revolu-
tionary sympathies; and if they were influenced by the past, they
had a passion for reforming the world. If none would have agreed
with Blake that "mere enthusiasm was all in all", it has been
argued that enthusiasm, which had once been a derogatory word,
had become the distinguishing feature of romantic literature.

Lamb could be taken as a person who was having all the cha-
racteristics of Romantic Movement with very few exceptions here
and there. Lamb was there among Wordsworth, Coleridge, Hazlitt,
and De Quincey who are considered to be the pioneers of romantic
movement. Lamb had not depicted nature in the manner of Words-
worth. Lamb kept himself aloof from the beauty of Nature. For
him the joys and sorrows of human beings were more real than the
aspects of natural beauty. Lamb's accounts are full of such
quality where he renders graphic picture with adroitness. There
was a Greek influence on Lamb. He loved to read Greek Art and literature. The influence of Montaigne is visibly shown on Lamb. His works are the true depiction of his 'Self'. Lamb uses French expression and sometimes Latin language. Lamb was greatly impressed and influenced by the works of Fuller, Burton and Browne. Browne's Religio Medici impressed him the most. These facts could be very well traced when Lamb's style is examined thoroughly. The exception where Lamb could be charged for not adhering to the principles of romantic characteristics is -- the depiction of day to day work and use of common language for the common man. This was one of the slogans of the romantics of this period.

Lamb loved to mystify his readers. When he uses mystification his language becomes subtle and complicated and no more common language for the common man. Otherwise through his other traits of personality and style he could very comfortably be termed as lovable romantic prose writer, poet, essayist and critic.

Lamb was born and brought up in the London streets. The city crowd, with its pleasures and occupations, its endless little comedies and tragedies, alone interested him. According to Lamb, when he paused in the crowded street tears would spring to his eyes, -- tears of pure pleasure at the abundance of so much good life; and when he wrote, he simply interpreted that crowded human life of joy and sorrow, as Wordsworth interpreted the woods and waters, without any desire to change or to reform them. He has given the best pictures of Coleridge, Hazlitt, Landor, Hood, Cowden Clarke and many more interesting men and
women of his age; and it is owing to his insight and sympathy that the life of those far-off days seems almost real. Of all our English essayists he is the most lovable; partly because of his delicate, old fashioned style and humour, but more because his sheer strong will power to struggle against tragic events of his life which is very well projected in all his writings.

Charles Lamb (1775-1834) has made himself popular to the generations of Englishmen for his *Essays of Elia* (1823) and *Last Essays* (1833) like Montaigne, he might have declared that he portrays his 'self' in his essays because he knows himself better. So he considered himself the better subject to write about.

His essays give an impression as though they are containing his autobiography. An autobiographical way of writing is more forceful and effective as the author knows himself very well and can present the minutest details about himself to the readers. This way of Lamb's writing made his readers and admirers as his personal friends. Dyson and Butt rightly observes:

>Lamb's personality is the stronger and many of his admirers are apt to treat him as a personal friend. They claim that to get the best from Lamb one must develop a personal allegiance to him.\(^{25}\)

The style of all these essays is gentle, old fashioned, irresistibly attractive. Lamb was especially fond of old writers and borrowed unconsciously from the style of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and from Browne's *Religio Medici* and from the early
English dramatists. But this style become a part of Lamb's style by regular readings; he was apparently unable to express his new thought without using their old quaint expressions. About his style Dyson and Butt say: "His style is like himself, allusive, whimsical, remote, familiar and almost wanton."²⁶

Though these essays are all criticisms or appreciations of the life of his age, they present excellent picture of humanity in general and of Lamb in particular.

Lamb's style consists of many styles -- it is a chemical, not a mechanical mixture. It is Lamb's own style. There are many points in which Lamb imitates the Elizabethan writers; e.g., in his love for word-coining, fondness for alliteration, use of compound words, formation of adjectives from proper names and frequent use of Latin words. He uses words which are now obsolete and are only to be found in Elizabethan writers. He seems to be very well familiar with the Elizabethan writers whom he follows in style. When he read these writers he was totally overwhelmed by them and could not help adopting their old-fashioned expressions. This fact is substantiated by Saintsbury also:

That a certain amount of his material is derived from actual loans supplied by the quainter writers of the mid seventeenth century, especially Burton, Fuller, and Browne, is perfectly true, as also that the essayist's debt to these for manner and method is even greater than his borrowings of actual matter or word. But a great deal remains which is simply Lamb himself and nobody else.²⁷
Despite the fact that Lamb is not modern in his style, his thoughts remain his own, fresh and original.

Lamb's style has "wit", "humour", and "fun". "Wit" is based on intellect, "humour" on insight and sympathy and "fun" on vigour and freshness of mind and body. Lamb's essays are full of these three traits. "Humour" is very nearly related to "pathos". His humour is largely healthy one but he could not prevent his mind from indulging in the darker and sadder side of life. Humour was his consolation for sorrow but, as with all great men, his apprehension of humanistic pathos and even tragedy were never quite submerged by his sense of comedy. Before he became Elia, he had masked himself with a number of pseudonyms, he had written of 'Charles Lamb' as if he were a chance acquaintance, and he even borrowed the person though not the personality of Coleridge, but at least in the cheerful pen-life of Elia he escaped the burdensome sadness of life as Lamb. His "wit", "humour" and "pathos" is all pervasive in his essays.

Hugh Walker gives a striking commentary on Lamb's style:

Lamb's style is inseparable from his humour. His "whim-whams", as he called them, found their best expression in the quaint words and antique phrases and multiplied and sometimes far fetched yet never forced comparisons in which he dwells. Strip Elia of these and he is nothing... Of no one else is the saying that the style is the man more true than of Lamb. In the deepest sense his style is natural and all his own.
Without a trace of self-assertion, Lamb begins with himself, with some purely personal mood or experience, and from this he leads the reader to see life and literature as he saw it. It is this wonderful combination of personal and universal interests, together with Lamb's rare old style and quaint humour, which makes the essays remarkable. They continue the best tradition of Addison and Steele, our first great essayists; but their sympathies are broader and deeper, and their humour more delicious, than any which preceded them. Emphasizing the quality of self-dramatization in Lamb's works Craig aptly observes:

The secret of Lamb's style is that he was himself an actor forever assuming some role at Oxford, 'I can here play the gentleman, enact the student'. He was forever pretending to be scholastic philosopher or a seventeenth century preacher dividing the human species into great new categories ....²⁹

Lamb's matter harmonizes with his manner of presentation. Lamb's memories are not like Wordsworth's, but he recalls them merely as material for his intellect and fancy to play upon. He plays with his thoughts as the wind plays with the leaves - moving them here and there as it wishes. All the conventional approaches of the Essay are quietly ignored by him. Never was any man more intimate in print than he.

Through his essays and letters he dramatizes himself and his life with his sister, a relationship between the brother and sister, lies unexampled in literature; he has won the affection
of countless readers, even of those who have little care for the beauties of literary style. To all of these, the love and confidence which the Lambs inspired among their friends is still a living thing and they can read with a sense of personal possession the touching words which Coleridge, at the end of a friendship of fifty years, inscribed in the margin of the poem written during a visit which Lamb paid to Stowey, :

Charles and Mary Lamb, dear to me as my heart, yea as it were my heart. 30
NOTES

2. Ibid., p.1
3. Ibid., p.3
4. Ibid., p.3
6. Ibid., p.165
7. Ibid., p.1
8. Ibid., p.65
9. Ibid., p.223
12. Ibid., p.157
13. Ibid., p.149
14. Ibid., pp.119-120.
15. Ibid., p.127
20. Ibid., p.17
21. Ibid., pp.25-26
22. Ibid., p. 27
23. Ibid., p. 28
24. Ibid., pp. 223-224
26. Ibid., p. 96