



W. HAZLITT AND C. LAMB ARE COMPLIMENTARY TO EACH OTHER—A STUDY

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Abstract:

W. Hazlitt and C. Lamb are complimentary to each other. There is a difference between their attitudes towards the past. Hazlitt is bitter while Lamb is sweet. Romantic era was essentially an age of poetry but these two-Lamb and Hazlitt established essay as one of the ways in which things personal could be expressed in sonorous prose. All the romantic essayists spun literature. Out of their own lives but Lamb's cultivated oddity and Hazlitt's boisterous energy have been missing in other essayists. Whatever is best in romantic prose is to be found in these two autobiographical essayists. In a sense they are the lasting glories of English essay tradition.

Keywords : careful, enable, complimentary, difference , attitudes, bitter , sweet, autobiographical, tradition.

Objectives-

1. Compare and contrast William Hazlitt and Charles Lamb as essayists.
2. Highlighting the similarities and differences in Hazlitt and Lamb as essayists.
3. To know, how W. Hazlitt and C. Lamb are Complimentary to each other.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:-

The research is based on the secondary data collected through various resources like journals, books, and web sites. The objective of this paper is to explore the similarities and differences in Hazlitt and Lamb as essayists.



Introduction :

William Hazlitt (1778-1830) and Charles Lamb (1775-1834) were contemporaries and both were writers of the familiar essay. Along with De Quincey and Leigh Hunt they form the nucleus of the best romantic prose of the early nineteenth century. Other writers, however, pale into insignificance before the brilliance and vigor of Lamb and Hazlitt. They are the two leading voices of the Romantic tradition in English essay.

Hazlitt and Lamb Complimentary to each other:

Hazlitt, who considered Lamb a good friend hailed him as the most delightful, the most provoking, the most witty and sensible of men," With him Lamb shared his love of books and pictures, and he also shared his friends. But Lamb's talent for holding many men's affections was conspicuously absent in Hazlitt. Being so much unlike from each other, we can assert that they were complimentary. For both the personal essay was a form of self-expression. Both of them wove their essays around their personal experiences. Both were ardent lovers of literature, and both were well-versed in the writings of many poets and authors. Both worked in a climate charged with the glow of imagination. Both of them could write sonorous, poetic prose full of poetic symbols, rhythms and metaphors.

Their Sense and Love of the Past :

Both Hazlitt and Lamb possessed a sense of humor. But it seems that Hazlitt's sense of humor was stifled in his early age, whereas Lamb's humor was his major achievement and crowning glory. Hazlitt's hot republicanism must have been a cause of anxiety to Lamb, whose disinterest in politics was proverbial. On the other hand, not sharing his friend's delight in quaint, forgotten authors on the borders of oblivion', Hazlitt supposed that Lamb had obsolete theology simply because he wanted to save himself from the pain of thinking. But he was aware of the fact that Lamb's ideas in such noteworthy essays as on Hogarth and Shakespeare had been a major influence on his works.

The genius of Lamb lay in his power of visualizing memories. As a stylist Lamb walks in the past, gathering to himself the pleasant tricks and mannerisms of the writers of bygone ages, just as a girl picks up flowers blending with her looks and carriage. The blossoms are all collected from other men's gardens, but the blending is Lamb's own. Filtering through Lamb's capacious imagination, they become typically his own, full of



freshness and novelty. His style is certainly an admixture of many styles, yet it is not a mechanical mixture, but a chemical one in which things lose their separate identities and become part of a coherent whole. Lamb's matter harmonizes with his manner and style. It also belongs to the past; its charm, to, is a retrospective one. It his dearly loved haunts it is the shadow of the Dygone ages that he sees, rather than the present actualities; a vanished face, a hushed voice, a recollected gesture, some familiar friend from the land of books, the memory of some remembered joyance. Lamb dearly loved" to chew the cud of a bygone vision" to dally with the dreams, to reinvest the common streets of London, and her well-worn sights, with a glamour of retrospective fantasy. Hazlitt also loved to look backwards, but with a difference.,

A major effort in Hazlitt's essays is to salvage and preserve the past--that huge, dumb heap of wishes, thoughts, feelings, anxious cares, soothing ho Des loves, joys and friendships that constitute one's life. He ranged ceaseless over his experiences, not to reconstruct events in sequence but to isolate them and brood upon those moments of elation or despair that, reverberating in his memory, linked the present with the past and in this manner define his own identity. The poignant moments of experience can last as long as life itself if they are cherished, for when steeped in thought and passion they triumph over time and even space. In the essays of Hazlitt we come across a sense of bitterness, which can be contrasted to the sweet humanity of the essays of Lamb. Hazlitt is moody, at times sour-tempered, and somewhat whimsical. He is of such a makeup that he cannot praise somebody anybody without dropping an unsavory or unpleasant remark soon after an encomium. When Lamb disliked a thing, either he did not touch it at all, or he attempted to understand it to the best of his ability or capacity. For instance, Lamb's essays on Quakers are the models of sympathetic understanding of people with whom he disagreed on many points. But Hazlitt, in such cases, is mostly critical. He is always ready with an argument, or prepared with a conclusion, a view that he could so persuasively present or a view to be held up for ridicule.

The spirit of eighteenth century is in evidence in Hazlitt to quite a great measure. Hazlitt can be called a literary vagabond, who loved open spaces and lonely excursions in nature. He went to the extent of asserting that nature was for him company enough. Hazlitt, living in solitude, sought to defend his solitude. But Lamb was a typical Londoner who felt himself lost as soon as he marched out of the precincts of that great



metropolis. Lamb loved the city with a passionate attachment that is lacking in Hazlitt, Naturally Lamb sought to celebrate the life of London through his inimitable essays. When compared with Lamb, Hazlitt falls short in this celebration of London by several degrees.

Differences as Critic:

In the realm of criticism too Hazlitt and Lamb stand compared. Scope and perspective of Hazlitt as a critic is certainly larger than that Of Lamb. But the judgments of Lamb fare saner in comparison to the sweep of Hazlitt. Lamb's romantic predilections serve him well in writing essays, but his lack of depth withdraws from him the greatness as critic. Though both of them were critics of Shakespeare, both are very dissimilar. writes with great admiration While Lamb Hazlitt writes about his personal impressions of Hazlitt strode through a large part of English literature and delivered his opinions and judgment on the majority of famous books. But Lamb is very limited in his of Shakespeare as critics.

A final Estimate:

As estimate of the comparative excellences of the two personal essayists been made by W. E. Henley who remarks: "As a writer. It is with has Iamb that I would bracket him [Hazlitt] they are dissimilar, but they go gallantly and naturally together-par Nobile fracture. Give us these two, the some ripe Cobber, a volume of Southey, some Wordsworth, certain n00es of Shelley, a great deal of the Byron who wrote letters, and we get the right prose of the time. The best of it all, perhaps is the best of Lamb. But Hazlitt's, for different qualities, is so eminent and shining a second that I hesitate as to the pre-eminency. Probably the race is Lamb's/But Hazlitt is ever Hazlitt; and at his highest moments Hazlitt is hard to beat., and has not these many years been beaten.

Conclusion:

By comparing Hazlitt to Lamb we can clearly see Hazlitt's limitations. It was not for Hazlitt, remarks Virginia Woolf, "to make play, like Lamb, with the figures of his friends, creating them afresh in fantastic flights of imagination and reverie. His characters are seen with the same quick sidelong glance full of shrewdness and suspicion which he darted upon the people in the flesh." In the presence of Hazlitt we can never forget that we are in England in the early part of nineteenth century; on the contrary, while reading Lamb we forget everything about the time when these essays were penned.



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