

ENGLISH

TOPIC:DREAM CHILDREN:A REVERIE

1. Auto-biographical essay.
2. Romantic elements in the essay: subjectivity, self-revelation, nostalgia, escapism, lucid language, portrait of nature.
3. Technique : stream of consciousness.
4. Themes: Dream vs reality, humour and pathos, escapism, nostalgia.
5. The essay is taken from autobiographical collection of essays 'Essays of Elia.'
6. Reverie : means day dream/ wishful thinking.
7. What do the children love to listen? ANS: stories of childhood of their elders when they were children to stretch their imagination. In stretching their imagination, they find pleasure. In the story Lamb tells his grand children stories of their uncle John L and their great grandmother Mrs Field.
8. "It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening..."
Here 'little ones' refer to Lamb's dream children.
By 'in this spirit' Lamb means their curiosity to know about the childhood stories of their elders whom they never saw.
The other evening they crept about to hear about their great grandmother.
9. Mrs. Field lived in a great house in Norfolk. The house was 100 times bigger than the house where Lamb lived.
10. The tragic incidents associated with the house in Norfolk refers to the children in the Wood. This incident is included in Bishop Percy's RELIQUES OF ANCIENT ENGLISH POETRY. According to the story, a 3

years old little son and a young daughter Jane are left by a Norfolk gentleman on his deathbed to the care of his deceased wife's brother. The uncle in order to get hold of their property left by their father hired two ruffians to murder them. One of the ruffians relented and then killed the companion. Then instead of murdering the babes, he left them in a wayland wood where they gathered blackberries but died at night with cold terror. The children were not buried. The Robin Red breasts as if taking pity on them covered their dead bodies with leaves and thus gave them a decent burial.

11. "till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set a marble one of modern civilization..."- 'Foolish rich person' refers to some later owner of the house.

He has been called foolish because he had no passion for old and antique things. He

changed the wooden chimney for a marble chimney.

'Pulled it down' means demolished the old chimney piece and in its place set up a marble

one with no story upon it.

12. 'Here Alice put out one of her....upbraiding.'-upbraiding means reproaching/ scolding. Alice is Lamb's dream daughter. Her reaction shows her disapproval of the act mentioned in question no 11.

13. Mrs Field was loved and respected by one and all because she was religious and good lady.

14. Mrs Field was not the mistress of the great house, but only a caretaker.

15. "...as if someone were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C's tawdry gilt drawing room."- Lamb here speaks of the removal of the old chimney- piece and its substitution by a modern marble one. It was as awkward and sacrilegious as if someone were to remove the ancient tombs from the Westminster Abbey and set them in the parlour of a modern lady of fashion.

Tawdry means gaudy/ showy. The word has an interesting story. It is 'a corruption of St.

Audrey .' At the annual fair of St. Audrey in the isle of Ely, showy lace called St. Audrey's

lace was sold and gave foundation to the word Tawdry which means anything

showy.[LADY C is an imaginary lady of rank and fashion.']

16. ' Here John smiled...that would be foolish indeed.'- John, the dream son, gave a smile of mockery and reproached the very idea of the transference of the tombs from the Westminster Abbey to a fashionable lady's gorgeously decorated drawing room.

17. Mrs. Field was a good and religious woman. Knew all the psaltery by heart and a great part of the Testament. A great dancer. She was tall, upright graceful. She died of cancer.

18. Mrs. Field's funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor and some of the gentry of the neighbourhood.

19. 'here Alice spread her hands.'- Alice does so when she hears that Mrs. Field knew the psalms and a great portion of the Testament. She spreads her hand to show her religiosity.

20. "Here Alice's RIGHT FOOT played an involuntary movement."- Alice reacted in this manner on hearing the fact that Mrs. Field was a great dancer.
21. "those innocents would do her no harm."- The innocents here refer to the apparition of two infants who were killed by their uncle. The apparition were seen at midnight gliding up and down the stair. 'her' refers to Mrs. Field.
22. "how frightened I used to be..." Lamb says this about himself. he was frightened at the idea of the apparition because he was not as good or religious as Mrs. Field. So he slept with his MAID.
23. "Here John expanded his eyebrows...courageous." John, the eldest dream children, feels ashamed of expressing his fear for an apparition. So, he expended his eyebrows to hide his feeling of fear. So he pretended to be courageous.
24. During when Lamb visited his great grandmother's house, he unlike other children spent many hours by himself by gazing upon the old busts of twelve caesars, roaming about in the empty rooms and in the spacious garden, lying upon the fresh grass, basking in the orangery, watching the dace darting to and fro.
25. "I had more pleasure in these busy idle diversions."- oxymoron. The busy idle diversions refer to the activities Lamb used to engage himself as mentioned in question no 24.
26. Common baits of children: peaches, nectarines, oranges.
27. The twelve Caesars were once the emperor of Rome.
28. In the empty rooms there were there were worn out hangings, fluttering tapestry, carved oaken panels.
29. Forbidden fruits: nectarines and peaches.

30. Yew trees were melancholy looking. Besides there were fir apples, red berries.
31. "which were good for nothing, but to look at."- which here refers to red berries and fir apples.
32. Mrs. Field loved all the grand children, but she loved John L most because he was so handsome and spirited youth. He was a king to the rest. Unlike Lamb he would mount the most mettlesome(strong) horse. He used to make it carry him half over the country in the morning., join the hunters. However, he also loved the great house and the garden.
33. When Lamb became lame footed, his elder brother John Lamb used to carry him upon his back. But when John Lamb became lame footed later, he did not repay the debt.
34. "such a distance there is betwixt life and death."-Charles Lamb here articulates his feelings of loss over his elder brother's death. The line speaks of the unlimited distance between life and death.
35. After his brother's death, Charles Lamb missed his brother's kindness and crossness(angry moods).
36. Alice W-n was really Ann Simmons. Charles courted her for seven years. Though she reciprocated the love, marriage did not take place since Charles was obliged to care for his semi- lunatic sister and remained a bachelor. She married the pawnbroker of Leicestershire Bartrum. So the dream children called hi their father.
37. The dream children must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before they have tangible existence of flesh and blood and a name.
38. When the reverie is over, Lamb found himself quietly seated in his bachelor arm chair with his faithful sister Bridget i.e., Mary Lamb.

39. John L (or James Elia)- Lamb thinks that he is Elia. So he gives his brother the name James Elia.