

David swan essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Nathaniel Hawthorn is a great novelist. He ranks high among American novelists because of his beautiful style, which is attributable to three main aspects of his works. He is a skillful craftsman, his work provides evidence of his moral nature and keen insight and his mastery of allegory and symbolism. Henry James regards him “ the most valuable example of the American genius. ” (James, 1996) Along with these main qualities Hawthorn style of writing is remarkable for its directness, clarity and firmness. There is an infallible rightness of language in his style.

Let us discuss these glaring qualities of his style in the background of his story “ David Swan”. Nathaniel Hawthorn is a skilful craftsman like Thomas Hardy. He has what is known as an “ architectonic” sense, a sense of the unity of structure. The structure of “ David Swan” illustrates this point. This short story has a highly integrated structure like that of another story “ Rappaccini’s Daughter” written by this author. The characters-David, the elderly merchant and his wife, the pretty young girl etc are inextricably bound together.

All the characters come and go and played their role in the story in proper balance and proportion. No part of this story can be exempted from it without disturbing the whole edifice that the author has erected with love and care. (Cohen, 1969) Hawthorn is a master of allegory and symbolism. Twentieth century has recognized the merit of his allegorical method. Symbols enlarge and deepen a writer’s meaning. Hawthorn’s principal device for developing meaning is the symbols. He records an idea for a story in his notebook, and he adds, significantly: “ It might be made emblematical of something”.

In this story "David Swan" the old man and his wife, the young girl and the widow symbolized different attitudes of people at different ages and different circumstances towards a basic human emotion "sleep". (Pennell, 1999; Fogle, 1952) Different people look upon this emotion in different ways and Nathaniel Hawthorn portrays it beautifully in his this short piece of art. At old age the worries and problems of life multiplied and make peaceful sleep something near to impossible. The words of old man in this story symbolizes his inner longing for this emotion as he said, "" How soundly he sleeps!" whispered the old gentleman.

" From what a depth he draws that easy breath! Such sleep as that, brought on Without an opiate, would be worth more to me than half my income; for it would suppose health and an untroubled mind. " Old ladies have a strong longing to become young again so that they should be able to enjoy the healthy pleasure of life and a sound sleep too which is denied to them in old age, the old lady said that, "" And youth, besides," said the lady. " Healthy and quiet age does not sleep thus. Our slumber is no more like his than our Wakefulness."

The reaction of young age of a girl towards the sleep is different, her reaction is free of the care and worry that torments the old people as she said, "" He is handsome! " thought she, and blushed redder yet. " Hawthorn is greatly tempted by the supernatural. This story also has the aura of supernaturalism around it. The beauty of fantastical writing is apparent in these words of the story teller, " After journeying on foot from sunrise till nearly noon of a summer's day, his weariness and the increasing heat

determined him to sit down in the first convenient shade, and await the coming up of the stage-coach.

As if planted on purpose for him, here soon appeared a little tuft of maples, with a delightful recess in the midst, and such a fresh bubbling spring that it seemed never to have sparkled for any wayfarer but David Swan. Virgin or not, he kissed it with his thirsty lips, and then flung himself along the brink, pillowing his head upon some shirts and a pair of pantaloons, tied up in a striped cotton handkerchief."

The magical atmosphere of this story can be compared with the atmosphere in Hawthorn's other story " Rappaccini's Daughter". His imagination is romantic in the deeper sense than it dealt with human nature under conditions highly selective and idealized. In the presentation of the human soul under idealized conditions, tinged with strangeness, lies the essence of Hawthorn's romanticism. For romance of this kind, the style of Hawthorne is admirably fitted.