The Symbols Of Robert Louis Stevenson's Life

Robert Louis Stevenson’s sickness as a child influenced his relationships with his father and nanny, experiences of living in Samoa and his journey to California, and continuous themes of identity and complexity of a character throughout his writing all contribute to his fame as a multi-talented writer of his time inspiring later authors and novels.

Robert Louis Stevenson’s writings were affected by the relationship with his father and his sick childhood which led to his nanny having to care for him. For example, due to his chronic lung disease, he wasn’t able to join the family business thus influencing his relationship with his father (Stern 11). Which then influenced the writing of Weir of Hermiston. This novel “has a trace in it of Stevenson’s old conflict with his family and neighbors in his youth, as it depicts a clash in the Scottish Lowlands between an authoritarian judge and his rebellious son” (Karbiener and Stade 1). In addition, when Stevenson was young his nurse named ‘Cummy’ was his primary caregiver and teacher making her an important companion to him thus dedicating a poetry book of his childhood to her (Hammond 4). This poetry book described his lonely imaginative childhood, gave moral advice to children, and consists of poems dedicated to his family and those who spent the most time with him as a child (A Child's Garden of Versus 1). In brief, Robert Louis Stevenson’s sick childhood influenced him into becoming a children’s book writer, and his writing resonated with relatable experiences.

Stevenson’s love-motivated journey to California and the experience of living in Samoa both greatly influenced his writing. For example, on his journey to California to meet his future wife, Stevenson wrote about the difficulties he encountered on his trip (Snodgrass 1). This influenced the making of his novel The Amateur Emigrant. This novel describes Stevenson’s journey on a packed train on his way to California, in which he observes the motivations of his fellow passengers which in turn made him less motivated (The Amateur Emigrant 1). In addition, Stevenson lived on the island of Samoa and experienced their political and social problems which gave him inspiration for his next novel (Karbiener and Stade 1). This non-fiction novel is In the South Seas. The novel describes the history and political affairs of Samoa with Europe and gives descriptions of the region by describing the people there, including the king of the island, and the scenery of the region as well (Karbiener and Stade 1). Overall, these two experiences shaped Robert Louis Stevenson’s writings for he was now known as a writer of social realism, was praised for his insight on world events, and was known as a writer of nonfiction books as well.

In Robert Louis Stevenson’s most famous works the thematic idea of identity is a central part. For instance, through the writing of The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Stevenson reveals that everyone has many personalities within them, good and evil, and you just have to uphold the identity you want to be. In this novel, Dr. Jekyll struggled with his inner self and his identity between himself and his alter ego Mr. Hyde who overpowers him into doing inferior things (Grant 1). The theme of identity was the conflict between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde for Jekyll struggled to restrain Hyde and strived to separate their personalities into two different identities (Grant 1). In addition, Treasure Island revolves around the same theme of identity that is shown in the development of the characters, especially the main character Jim Hawkins. In this novel, “young Jim Hawkins gets caught up in a table of intrigue involving pirates, seafaring,

and buried treasure” (Ashley 1). Throughout the novel, Jim Hawkin’s identity changed from being brave and cautious to something that shifted his identity completely due to him being capricious (Ashley 1). As shown above, Stevenson illustrates explicit morals and the shifting nature of identity between good and evil in one’s self, influencing his writing style as a romance author.

Robert Louis Stevenson inspired the book The Hulk and was the inspiration for the Stevenson Society. For example, The Stevenson Society’s objective is to keep Robert Stevenson’s reputation alive and known worldwide (A list of RLS Societies 1). On the centenary of A Child’s Garden of Versus, the club raised funds to create a memorial for R.L.S in Edinburgh (A List if RLS Societies 1). The RLS memorial trust was established to help children with respiratory diseases in memory of Stevenson (A List of RLS Societies 1). In addition, Stevenson's work The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde inspired later scientific action works (Karbiener and Stade 1). In the comic book, the Hulk/scientist shows “a more primitive, darker side of himself” just like Dr. Jekyll who also showed a complexity of mixed personalities within one character (Karbiener and Stade 1). All things considered, Stevenson will forever be known for his romance and adventure novels that inspired later works and authors leaving a memorable reputation.