

Robert Louis Stevenson

Was born in Edinburgh in 1850 and he studied law.

Since childhood he had suffered from ill health, nevertheless he took up a life of adventure and traveling and initially began writing about his travels.

In America he married Mrs Fanny Osburne, whom he had met in France. On his return he became a professional writer.

As a writer, he also produced a large number of essays, short stories and poems.

In 1886 he wrote "The Strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde".

He dies suddenly in 1894.

Most people familiar with the story and characters of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, but few would be prepared for the sophistication of the narrative technique, which is based on letters and diaries, that gradually reveal the full horror of the story.

Added to this, Stevenson's work also displays a fresh and arresting vision of human duality, and shows how human nature is split between good and evil.

The adventure and thriller elements of his work, combined with the formal qualities, explain Stevenson's enduring appeal to young and adult readers alike.

The Strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Was written in 1886 and was Stevenson's second novel and the one that established his reputation as a novelist.

This work was a dramatic departure from his first novel "treasure Island", in that work the dividing line between good and evil was very clear, there were evil pirates and a group of good adventurers; in his second novel there is no such reassuring difference between these two forces, which are shown struggling for domination within the same man.

Moreover, it is evil that triumphs and leads to the gradual destruction of good.

In telling his story of the man of science who tries to separate the good of himself from the evil, Stevenson drew on certain aspects of the Gothic tradition. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein had made readers familiar with the scientist who works alone in his laboratory on his forbidden experiments. However, there is an important difference: whereas Victor Frankenstein breaks biological laws, Henry Jekyll interferes with moral nature.

In both works the man of science is destroyed by his creation, but Stevenson intensifies the close bond between the scientist and his creation, moving them in the same person. Stevenson combined these Gothic motifs with some elements common in other genres, for example sordid violence, mystery, unsolved crimes and so on.

The narrative is a mixture of the third and first person. Stevenson never reveals more than the point of view of his characters makes possible, their knowledge is always incomplete and this increases suspense, fear, curiosity.

The theme of dualism in this work is defined as an extreme study of the Victorian vice of hypocrisy. The question the novel poses is whether man should try to recognize that as a desire to be good is illusory and whether he needs to acknowledge the power of his irrational impulses in human nature.

The plot:

Utterton, Jekyll's lawyer, is convinced that there is a link between Jekyll and Hyde, who has been responsible for a number of violent crimes. He believes that Jekyll is being blackmailed into helping Hyde, who can never be found after his crimes. At a certain point in the story, Jekyll refuses to see any of his friends and keeps sending his butler Poole to the chemist's for a chemical salt. This is to help him change back into himself. He slowly

realizes that he was only able to resume his identity thanks to impurity in the original salts and that now he is trapped in his alter ego, Hyde.

Poole calls Utterson and they break into the laboratory, where they find a dead man. It is Hyde, but there is no sign of Jekyll. They then search Jekyll's desk and find a package addressed to Utterson and in it he finds two letters: one is from a friend, Dr Laynon, who explains what he knows about Jekyll and the second is from Jekyll.