

'the outsiders' and 'the withered arm'

Literature



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BUSTER**

'The Outsiders' is a story written by S. E Hinton in 1967, when she was only 17 years old. S. E Hinton wrote the story of a 14 year old boy named Ponyboy, who lives a lifestyle of violence, gangs, Greasers, Socs and brotherhood, because she knew someone in her own life like Ponyboy and felt that his story and message needed to be told and understood. Similarly in 'The Withered Arm' which was written by Thomas Hardy in 1893, used memories of events that he got told when he was young.

However Thomas Hardy believed that a story is not worth telling if you don't have " something more unusual to relate to than the ordinary experience of every average man or woman", all of his stories come from local history, traditions and folklore. Hardy tells the story of outcasts, parenthood, poor lives, having to work hard and jealousy, the story concludes with farmer Lodge, however much a father who ignores his son, hears that his son is going to be hanged, he knows they have an unbreakable tie and regrets ignoring him. In S. E Hinton's story 'The Outsiders', the message told to the readers is 'Stay Gold'.

I think 'Stay Gold' means that when you are young everything is good in your life ('Gold') and that should stay that way forever ('Stay'), never coming across or becoming bad things. The 'Stay Gold' theme appears in the story when both Johnny and Ponyboy are watching the sunrise in Windrixville, when Ponyboy remembered a poem he had studied at school, but could not work out what the writer meant by it. 'Stay Gold' appears again in Johnny's death letter to Ponyboy, in which Johnny says, " I've been thinking about that poem, he meant you're old when you're a kid, like green. When you're a kid everything's new, like dawn.

It's just when you are used to everything that its day. Like the way you dig sunsets, Pony, that's gold, keep it that way it's a good way to be. " The other message I feel is told to the readers, is that you shouldn't judge people, be it because of how they look or where they live, for example 'Someone should tell their side of the story, and maybe people would understand them and wouldn't judge a boy by the amount of hair oil he wore' and because the Socs have nice cars, nice houses and nice clothes, people look at them and don't see any bad things about them, when in fact they are the ones that fight people for fun and personal enjoyment

One of the main differences within the two books is the language used, because of the different centuries they were written in. In 'The Withered Arm' the language used is old fashioned, formal, Dorset dialect, 'Though they say she's a rosy-cheeked, tisty-tosty body enough', 'He hadn't spoke to Rhoda Brook for years' In 'The Outsiders' the language used is modern American Slang, for example Johnny says " Like the way you dig sunsets", which means like the way you like sunsets. Other words that indicate the language to be American slang are, 'heaters' which means guns, 'broad' which means girl and 'the fuzz' meaning the police.

Neither books contain swearwords, but for different reasons. Hardy doesn't use swearing because 'The Withered Arm' is set so back in time, that people of that would not have used that sort of language. In 'The Outsiders' no swearing is used, which would obviously have been used by the characters, so instead the author would use words like 'shoot'. This is because S. E. Hinton wanted the book to read by everyone and if the books contained swear words, then school children would not be permitted to read the book.