

Stay Gold, Ponyboy

“Nothing gold can stay” is a quote that Jonny has left us with at the end of *The Outsiders*. Ponyboy always wanted to grow up and become mature, yet he does not realize what adulthood brings. Innocence is gold. It is something that is valuable and should be preserved. One quality that distinguishes Ponyboy from the rest of the greasers was his innocence. Throughout the story, as he grows up, he finds himself in trouble facing the reality of the cruel world. Thus, S.E Hinton is emphasizing the importance of innocence through Ponyboy.

Ponyboy’s innocence can be seen compared to other characters such as Dally. Dally is a very cold and mean character. From the start we are given an insight into Dally’s character from the statement “It would be a miracle if Dally loved anything.” (page 59) However, as the story goes by we realize that the only thing he loves was Johnny. According to the fact that he only loved Johnny, it showed that he didn’t really care about anything at all. In contrast, Ponyboy loved so many people. He loved Dally, Sodapop, Two-Bit , and a lot more. Besides this, the book has told us that “He had been arrested, he got drunk, jumped small kids - he did everything,” (page11) It shows that Dally does not mind doing bad things. Contrasting to Ponyboy who does not do any of these things at all. While Ponyboy and Johnny were in stage of shock after Johnny killed Bob. Dally’s response was simply “Good for you” (page59) In the end of the story, Dally got to the point where dying doesn’t matter. “I knew he was dead, because Dally Winston wanted to be dead and he always got what he wanted.” (page154)

S.E. Hinton tries to show the readers that Ponyboy is innocent. In the beginning of the book, Ponyboy does not understand why there has to be separate gangs and the reasons that they have to fight one another. He does not think it’s fair that they are born poor while the socs are born rich. “I really couldn’t see what Socs would have to sweat about — good

grades, good cars, good girls, madras and Mustangs and Corvairs — Man, I thought, if I had worries like that I'd consider myself lucky.”(page 36) This statement shows that he has a stereotype that the socs do not have to deal with problems and they just have all the privileges in life. However, Cherry meant it when she said that socs do have the same problems as the greasers. Ponyboy is not mature enough to understand these little things. Also, he does not recognize how much Darry loves him. He states in the book that “Darry doesn't love anyone or anything, except maybe Soda.” (page18) However, we all know that this is not true because Darry dedicates his life in order to take care of Sodapop and Ponyboy. Darry stops him from fighting with the socs and getting into lots of trouble.

Throughout the story, Ponyboy loses his innocence and he begins facing a lot of problems. After Johnny killed Bob, he had to run away to the church in Jay Mountain. During this time, he started to understand how things were. He starts to realize that he is always welcome in his home. Darry is worried about him and actually cares about him so much. He starts to miss his home. This shows that as he grows up, he wants to become innocent again. Furthermore, Johnny's fatal attack on Bob might result him in going to a Boys' home. In the beginning of the story, Ponyboy felt like he would leave the house because Darry didn't want him. He said himself that “It was plain to me that Darry didn't want me around. And I wouldn't stay if he did.” (page 50) However, as the story goes by Ponyboy does not want to go to a Boys' home or anywhere else. All he wants is not to get separated from his brothers and he says that “No, they ain't goin' to put us in a boys' home.” (page 109) Besides this, before Johnny dies, he left a letter to Ponyboy saying that “and that poem, that guy that wrote it, he meant you're gold when you're a kid, like green. When you're a kid everything's new dawn... Like the way you dig sunsets, Pony. That's gold. Keep that way, it's a good way to be.” (page 178) Johnny's last words in the letter remind Ponyboy to keep his innocence

because it is very important. Although Ponyboy loses his innocence throughout the story, he is still innocent.

In conclusion, Ponyboy wants to grow up throughout the story. Not until the end of the story, he then realizes that he should keep his innocence. Compared to other characters like Dally, Ponyboy is very innocent. He stays out of trouble without knowing it. Throughout the story, there is plenty of evidence to support that Ponyboy is innocent. We see that Ponyboy should keep the quality of innocence that makes him unique from everyone else. Ponyboy should stay gold.