

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of the Research

Literature is a part of our cultural heritage that can enrich everyone's life in many ways. Literary works can be entertaining, beautiful, funny, tragic, informative or meaningful. They take us beyond the limited experience of our life to show us the lives of others and to give us experiences that we may not face in our own lives. It leads us intellectually and emotionally, and deepens our understanding about the life itself. Not to mention, a literary work has a certain message for its readers. One of them is about the cycle of life. Therefore, the readers have to read the literary work line by line in order to understand the certain message in it.

In the history of world literature, one of the famous authors that shows about the cycle of life is Robert Frost, an American poet who wrote his poems over a long span of America's history. His poetry has been anthologized in American schoolbooks for decades, others know him as the poet who was chosen to read at John P. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961. He was, in fact, President Kennedy's favorite poet.

Frost first book, *A Boy's Will*, was published in 1913 in England, where he was living at the time, and his last book, *In the Clearing*, was issued in 1962. He was honored during his lifetime as much as any other American poet has ever been. He received the Pulitzer Prize for poetry four times; he was given more than a score of honorary degrees at such prestigious universities as Harvard and Princeton; he was praised by such diverse critics as Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, and Randall Jarrell.

In this research, the researcher takes Robert Frost's *Nothing Gold Can Stay* that presents the awareness of passing time without bewailing it. Frost foregoes such lamentation thus, "Nothing Gold Can Stay" ends where it began, with a repetition of the initial statement. In his poem, Frost portrays the pessimism notion since he wants us to master the flux of life, accept the moment before it passes. Frost accepts the transitory as a fact.

Frost's poem 'Nothing Gold Can Stay' is surely famous and has been read by many people all over the world. One of the author which have been influenced by this poem is S.E Hinton. Hinton is an American author whose subjects are mostly about young adult life. Hinton has won many awards for her books. Hinton has won the ALA Best Books for Young Adults Award four times; she won the award for her works; *That Was Then, This Is Now* (in 1971), *Rumble Fish* (in 1975) and for *Tex* and *Taming the Star Runner* (in 1979). Hinton has also won a "[School Library Journal](#) Best Books of the Year Award" for *Rumble Fish*, and *Tex* and *Taming the Star Runner*. In 1979, Hinton received three other awards for both *Tex* and *Taming the Star Runner*. Hinton's first and only award for a children's book is the "Parent's Choice Silver Honor Book Award" which she won for *The Puppy Sister*. Overall, Hinton has won 19 awards from 21 nominations.

One of the famous works of S.E Hinton is *The Outsiders*. It is a novel about the clashes of the two gangs, the Greasers and the Socs in the small town of Tulsa, Oklahoma during the 1960s. Ponyboy Curtis, one of the greasers is the narrator of this story, and it is through his eyes that the events unfold. Ponyboy takes the reader through a two-week period that will shape the rest of his better life. This novel has

sold over fourteen million copies since it was published. In 1983, *The Outsiders* became a movie, and was later released onto DVD.

The main characters in *The Outsiders*, Ponyboy Curtis really loves reading literary works. When he and Johnny were hiding in the old church, they spent their time to read a book such as *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell and this book can be coherent with them since some characters in the book could be identified as his friend in the real life. ‘I bet they were cool ‘ol guys, after I had read the part about them riding into sure death because they were gallant. They remind me of Dally’ (75) the influence of the book not only seen in the characters but also in the characterization. ‘.. But I realized that these three appealed to me because they were like the heroes in the novels I read’ (76) the same reflection of the book with his real life is one of the example how literary work can make connection with its readers. In the same case when they watch the sunset in the back of the church, Johnny shows his disillusionment because the pretty of color of sunset cannot stay forever, then Ponyboy suddenly remembers a poem by Robert Frost entitled ‘Nothing Gold Can Stay’. But, this poem shows different thing because the poem makes the connection and influence the main characters in their life.

As the researcher mentioned above, the novel obviously citing Robert Frost’s ‘Nothing Gold Can Stay’ for particular reason, making the researcher interested to analyze how one literary work affects another literary work. In the novel, the phrase ‘Nothing Gold Can Stay’ get the modification in one of the character’s hand. The phrase become ‘stay gold’ which spoken by Johnny (another Greasers member) at the times he would die. The different way of giving meaning to Gold and its

influences is the primary basis of this research. Given the distinction, the researcher finds that S.E Hinton quotes Robert Frost poem 'Nothing Gold Can Stay' intentionally to change the meaning of the phrase in order to show the big impact of the meaning transformations toward character's life. Hence, the researcher entitled this research **The Gold Can Stay: The Meaning Transformation of the Word 'Gold' in Robert Frost's 'Nothing Gold Can Stay' and S.E Hinton's *The Outsiders***

### 1.2 The Identification of the Problem

*The Outsiders* cites Frost's 'Nothing Gold Can Stay' by using the word 'gold' in different way. While Frost believes that nothing 'gold' can stay gold forever, Hinton indeed suggest her characters to 'stay gold'. It is obvious that Hinton in *The Outsiders* uses the poem 'Nothing Gold Can Stay' as her reference and changes the meaning for certain purpose to adjust it with the theme of her novel. Therefore, this research is conducted to show the meaning transformation between the two texts through the word 'gold'.

### 1.3 The Scope of the Research

This research consists of interpreting and comparing primary sources that is "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Robert Frost and *The Outsiders* by S.E Hinton. I will apply a comparative study in order to find out the different meaning of Gold in each works. To reach the meaning of Gold, I used *New Criticism* theory by seeing the intrinsic elements of both works. In the last, this research will be focused on the meaning transformations of the word 'gold' and the effect of the meaning

transformation to the character's life. This research is basically an intrinsic analysis, which means that the research is objectively based on the work itself without relating to other texts.

#### **1.4 The Research Question**

There are some questions that will be answered by running this research, they are:

1. What is the general and detailed meaning of the poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay”?
2. What is the meaning of “Stay Gold” in *The Outsiders*?
3. How is the meaning of the word ‘gold’ transformed? How far does the poem affect character and change his way of seeing life?

#### **1.5 The Objective of the Research**

This research has two objectives. The first is general objective, which is to enrich the research of literary criticism particularly on contemporary works with the genre of young adult literature. While the specific objectives are:

1. To show the general and detailed meaning of the poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay”.
2. To reveal the meaning of “Stay Gold” in *The Outsiders*.
3. To demonstrate the meaning transformation of the word ‘gold’ from “Nothing Gold Can Stay” to the phrase ‘stay gold’ and its effects to the character in the novel.

#### **1.5 The Review of Related Studies**

To conduct this research, there are several studies that the researcher found in accordance with the object of this research but different in approach.

The first is an article in 2014 by Dan Shi from the University of Hong Kong, China entitled ‘De-egocentricity and Socialization: A study of Hinton’s *The Outsiders*’. Shi in his article examines adolescent development in Hinton’s *The Outsiders* as the major theme based on psychoanalytic theories. He wants to expound on the process of de-egocentricity and socialization of the major protagonists in Hinton’s *The Outsiders* from the aspects of de-egocentricity and socialization. He finds that the essence of adolescent development is to undergo de-egocentricity in order to better understand others and socialization so as to raise social norms consciousness. The interaction between de-egocentricity and socialization exposes adolescent’s achievement of coming-of-age and reveals the major theme of the novel “a heroic story of friendship, belonging” and development. This article will be very useful for my research since the author gives the brief idea about the process of adolescent development toward their role in society.

The next article is ‘Why *The Outsiders* Lives On: A Teenage Novel Turns 50’ by Hayley Krischer in 2017. This article tells about the big impact of *The Outsiders* toward the readers since one of its fan, Danny O’Connor bought the Outsiders House, where the Curtis brothers — Darry, Sodapop and Ponyboy — lived in the 1983 Francis Ford Coppola movie based on Ms. Hinton’s book *The Outsiders*. Connor bought this house for \$15,000 in 2016, determined to turn it into a museum. Then the writer of the article also found that the hashtag #staygold which

is inspired by Robert Frost's poem that appears in the book, is attached to more than 300,000 Instagram posts. Also the writer adding some commentary from the readers and shows how this story very close with the heart of teenager. It is relevant to my thesis because this article shows us the big impact of *The Outsiders* toward its readers. The part that brightens my view about this novel which she stated, this novel successfully presents the theme about teenager survival life and ends up with a better hope. The difference between her work with mine is she focuses on how *The Outsiders* affects to the readers meanwhile I will highlight the effects of Robert Frost's poem to character's life in the novel.

The third is a dissertation that discusses about the collection of the poem by Robert Frost. The dissertation was written by Nancy B. Myers in 1969 from North Texas State University entitled "Human Relationship in the Poetry of Robert Frost". This dissertation describes a significant aspect of Frost's poetry. Myers analyzes about the human situation which represent in Frost's poem and the relationships of mankind: man's struggle to accept himself and his life situation, to achieve harmony with his fellow man, to realize happiness with one of the opposite sex, and to seek answers to his relationship with his Creator. This thesis attempts to illustrate that Robert Frost was among those who found, these the most significant themes for poetic expression. In particular, this article will assist that "Nothing Gold Can Stay'," by Robert Frost presents the awareness of passing time without bemoaning it. The author approves that Robert Frost wants us to master the flux of life and accept the moment before it passes. Frost accepts the transitory as a fact.

The last is a dissertation written by Tulay Dagoglu from Istanbul Aydin University in 2012. His dissertation entitled “Robert Frost’s Reflection on Man’s Isolation and its Connection to Something in Nature” which explains about basic method of Frost for the structure of the nature poems. Human life and the remoteness of nature have parallels and show us with the help of Frost’s ability to focus on different and vast areas of experience. The author states that the poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay” draws our attention to the basic method and paths in nature which is equal to human experience with Frost’s insistence on the vastness of nature. The author provides a strong theoretical human beings' maturity stage to the leaf losing its innocence. The fading of the leaf illustrates not only a loss of beauty but also the corruption which comes with maturity. It is relevant to my thesis because this dissertation authorize that human nature follows the same process as nature.

## **1.6 The Theoretical Framework**

This research is conducted by explaining the theme of the poem and the novel which referring to *New Criticism* theory and later are compared to uncover the meaning transformation of the word ‘gold’ and its effects to the character in the novel.

### **1.6.1 Objective Approach**

This research is basically an intrinsic analysis, which means that the research is objectively based on the work itself without relating to other text or some larger context, such as the author’s life or an historical period.

### **1.6.2 *New Criticism***



*New Criticism* is one of literary criticism which focuses on the prominent literary elements of the text and sees how those elements deliver the content/theme. According to Cleanth Brooks form (words and techniques) and content (meaning or theme) of a literary text cannot be separated from each other. The form is the embodiment of the work's content and the content can only be expressed through form (102-104).

The form and meaning of a literary work called as an organic unity. It is like a complex living organism whose parts cannot be separated from the whole. And indeed, the work's organic unity—the working together of all the parts to make an inseparable whole—is the criterion by which New Critics judged the quality of a literary work. According to Louis Tyson, "If a text has an organic unity, then all of its formal elements work together to establish its theme, or the meaning of the work as a whole" (2006:138-139).

According to the book entitled *Concepts of Criticism* written by René Wellek (1963), the name *New Criticism* became widely used to describe this approach to understanding literature with the publication of John Crowe Ransom's *New Criticism* which also contained Ransom's personal analysis of several of his contemporary theorists and critics. Ransom's principles is to seek for an ontological critic that would recognize a poem (use it as a synonym in *New Criticism* for any literary work). While the theory of Cleanth Brook as known as form and content, Ransom distinguishes between "texture" and "structure" in poetry. "Texture" is the seemingly irrelevant detail, the concrete local life of a poem which represents the qualitative richness of the world, while "structure" is the indispensable logical

statement which poetry must make about reality (1963). Obviously, the idea of *New Criticism* emphasizes the work as a self-contained unit or something to be studied in the work itself.

*New Criticism* theory also known as *Formalism*. The practitioners of *Formalism*, they so called *formalist*, focus on the form rather than the content. According to the book entitled "A Short Guide to Writing About Literature" written by Barnet and Cain, the name of *formalism* or *formalist criticism* itself is used because the focus was "...the form of the work, the relationship between the part – the construction of the plot, the contrast between characters, the function of rhymes, the point of view and so on" (106). In other words, formalist criticism or *New Criticism* is intrinsic criticism which mainly concerned with the form, language, style, symbol, image, contrast, structure, and development of plot in literary work. The use of words on the page are utmost importance for the critic.

Related to my study, I apply this theory by analyzing 3 points, they are: to show the general and detailed meaning of the poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay", to reveal the meaning of "Stay Gold" in *The Outsiders* and to demonstrate the meaning transformation of the word 'gold' from "Nothing Gold Can Stay" to the phrase 'stay gold' and its effects to the character in the novel.

### **1.7 The Methods of the Research**

In conducting this research, the researcher takes three steps. They are:

- Collecting Data

There are two kinds of data used in this research, the primary data, which is taken from both literary work, 'Nothing Gold Can Stay' by Robert Frost and *The Outsiders* by S.E Hinton. The secondary data which are taken from literary theory books and articles related to this study. The data is collected by using library research methods; reading the books, articles, journals and browsing in the internet.

- Analyzing Data

The second step is analyzing the data. In this part, the researcher firstly started the research by comparing both literary work, 'Nothing Gold Can Stay' by Robert Frost and the phrase 'stay gold' in *The Outsiders* by S.E Hinton to find out the meaning transformation of these works about seeing the life through the meaning of Gold in each work.

- Presenting Data

The last step is presenting the result of analysis. In presenting the result of analysis, the descriptive method will be applied. This method provides an analysis evaluation or judgement of the quality of a literary or artistic works, dramatic performance, art exhibition or dramatic production.

Frankel and Wallen said that "*descriptive method is a method used to explain, analyze, and classify something through various techniques...*" (1993:23)

The method of presenting the data is descriptive analysis, it means that the data are collected in form of words or pictures rather than in form of number.

