

Compare between the two endings

A Handful of Dust is a novel written by the English novelist Evelyn Waugh. Throughout the novel, Waugh discusses one of the most important themes, which is lack of morality. The novel talks about the effect of lack of morality on the English society in the period between the Two World Wars. The novel has two endings which Waugh has used to assure his idea. Each one reflects the effect of the moral disintegration upon the society at that time.

On the one hand, the first ending is after Dr. Messinger's death. Dr. Messinger has gone with Tony during his search for his utopia. This is the main reason for Tony's trip. He wants to see good people again and to forget all about the past. However, he is left alone after his partner's death, suffering from fever. Then, he meets Mr Todd who takes him to his island and cures him from fever. After his recovery, Mr Todd asks Tony to stay with him. He tells Tony that he will not leave and go back to England. Thus Tony completes the rest of his life on the uncivilized island imprisoned by a non-mentally stable man. Finally Tony dies after his failure in finding his ideal city where people keep moral and old traditions. His dream of utopia is lost and Tony loses his life with it.

Tony's death is considered to be the end of the existence of morals and old traditions. Tony is the last one who has morals. Therefore, by his death, no morality exists. Brenda is going to marry Jock Manzies, Tony's friend. They will be happy. Though Jock knows everything about Brenda's affair and her bad character, he will marry her. This shows the bad and immoral character of that man and subsequently that society. Furthermore, Hetton Abbey, the symbol of morality and old traditions, will move to Richard Last, Tony's cousin, who cares for nothing in his life but rabbits. Thus, he does not appreciate its historical value and Hetton will lose its symbolism of morals and old traditions.

On the other hand, the second ending of the novel also assures Waugh's idea about the lack of morality at that time. Tony returns from Brazil, and finds Brenda waiting to apologise for what she has done with Beaver and blames herself for doing so. She also asks Tony to forgive her and to accept her in his life once more. He agrees and returns with her to Hetton, their old house. Moreover, he takes Brenda's flat in London and asks Mrs. Beaver to prepare it on her own taste. He knows that he used to hate this lady in the past. This shows the changes that take place inside Tony. He decides to go with the society in being more free and also more savage, leaving the medieval deeds of the past which have been criticized by the whole society.

Tony has not found what he has been looking for. He is not able to find the city of morals and old traditions. Therefore, he returns to England and starts a

new life but in a new way. He decides to be part of the bad immoral society. He loses his principles and morals. That shows the loss of hope in the society, where Tony has been the last hope for morals. Yet, upon giving up his morals, this shows the death of the hope and the disintegration of morals and old traditions too.

To sum up, Waugh is successful in conveying his message by writing two different endings for the novel. He also succeeds in emphasizing his idea throughout the events and the characters of the novel.