

The Irony in "A Handful of Dust" & "The Remains of the Day"

Irony is one of the methods used by both writers in order to show the changes that occur in the traditional life and emphasises the decay of their civilization.

In The Remains of the Day, the irony is used to portray post world war with all its changes. It is very ironic that Mr Farraday, the American gentleman, buys Darlington Hall, as the fact that the Europeans reject the American ideas during the conference. Moreover, it is even more ironic that the Americans end up having enough money to buy the British civilization. It is also ironic that Lord Darlington asks Stevens to explain the facts of life to young Mr Cardinal. In addition, it is ironic that Miss Kenton ends up leading a happier life than Stevens who used to think that he is better than her.

In A Handful of Dust, it seems very ironic that Tony insists on trusting Brenda. The irony is even stronger because everyone else seems to know her relationship with Beaver. When John Andrew dies, his main concern is how to tell Brenda. The irony is that he thinks that she does not have anything else other than her son. In reality, Brenda receives the news as a relief when finding that the dead John is her son and not her lover.

The reader sympathizes with him for his faithfulness and ignorance. The reader also sympathizes with him when he and Brenda meet Beaver at a party. Tony thinks that Beaver is lonely and tries to be friendly to him. The reaction of society to Tony's final decision is also ironic. Nobody sympathizes with him; he is condemned as a criminal. Rattery is referred to as the shameless bland. In reality she turns out to be more considered than Brenda and her likes.

Allan and Brace's wives have been crazy about other men. They simply ignore what has happened as if it was not. This makes it very clear that it is a fashionable thing of modern society. There is another irony in which Tony has gone searching for a city and running away from savages of London to meet others in the jungle who are same as him except for the appearance.

Furthermore, there is an irony that in spite of Beaver's worthless character, people entertain him because he amuses them by gossiping. Brenda will marry Jock who represents old fashion and traditions like Tony.

The Setting in "A Handful of Dust" & "The Remains of the Day"

Setting plays an important role in A Handful of Dust and The Remains of the Day. The two novels deal with the period between the two world wars in England. The setting is very important in describing the decay of civilization.

In The Remains of the Day the events take place in England in the period between the two world wars. The historical, social and political backgrounds are essential for the events. The novel deals with a very specific period in the English history. Moreover, the Darlington Hall is equally important because it has the history built in it. It also represents British tradition. The downfall of the house represents the decay of civilization.

During the first world war, the British life begins to change. Thus, Stevens is lost in a world that he cannot understand and England has completely changed due to the experience of war. The second world war is stronger. People whom Stevens meet throughout his journey are all people who have changed due to experiencing war. They express new ideas that Stevens is ignorant of. They even attack Lord Darlington as a guilty and traitor.