

The Hero as a victim in “A Handful of Dust” & “The Remains of the Day”

In both A Handful of Dust by Evelyn Waugh and The Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro, both heroes appear as victims.

In The Remains of the Day, Stevens is the victim of his beliefs. He is a prisoner of his own life from present to past to present. He is a prisoner of the traditions he has lived in. He sees that in order to be professional, he is not supposed to show his feelings. He likes to see what he cannot do that is done by someone else as a compensation for himself. When he knows the escape of the two servants, he cannot imagine how such things can encourage such people to give up their lives of professionalism to a life of fancies. He loves Miss Kenton but he shows this through offending her even by making her cry since his professionalism is much more important to him than anything else.

He has always been living behind a mask. He never gives himself the chance to open up even when writing his diary. At the end, he realizes that he has missed great things in his life journey. He loses warmth, freedom and the joy of having one. He sees things with the eye of a butler. He has no sense of what the world outside Darlington Hall is like.

Stevens thinks that being a butler, he must measure himself according to moral roles and principles of behaviour for deciding what is wrong and right of a butler. He likes to maintain a distance in all his relationships. At the end, he does not change utterly as a butler. He becomes a mock butler in order to entertain his master, Mr Farraday.

In A Handful of Dust, Tony is another victim. He is a victim of his own world, ideas and beliefs. He seems to belong to a world that no longer exists. He is the last member of a certain tradition that is now ended. His morals, principles and ideals seem to belong to a world of glamour which is old fashioned. He has imprisoned himself in a false world. There is a contrast between the innocent country life that Tony leads and the noisy savage life of city represented by Mrs. Beaver and others.

He enjoys playing the role of landowner. He goes to the church not for religious reasons but to show people around the house that he is religious. He does not see Brenda's fault. He loves and trusts her; he allows her to have a flat and when she refuses to allow him into her flat, he feels guilty of getting drunk. Consequently, when he knows about his wife's unfaithfulness, he begins to encounter the ugliness of the true world and goes away searching for the city of glamour.