

The Narrative Voice in "A Handful of Dust" & "The Remains of the Day"

The points of view of A Handful of Dust by Evelyn Waugh and The Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro are different. In The Remains of the Day, the novelist uses the first person narration. Meanwhile, in A Handful of Dust, the novelist uses the third person narration.

In A Handful of Dust, the third person narration allows the writer to go wherever he wishes and to go inside the minds of his characters. In other words, the omniscient is the most flexible point of view. The writer has the advantage to describe all the events even if they are happening at the same time, for instance; the readers can see how Tony is faithful to Brenda at Hetton, while she is unfaithful to him in London.

In The Remains of the Day, the hero, Stevens, tells the story in the first person narration. The first person point of view is limited. The readers are exposed to the events through his mind and senses. As a result, he can choose to hide anything from the reader, for instance; he is always wearing a mask in order to hide his feelings. He almost deceives the reader. His feelings for Miss Kenton and his father are not expressed only to the intelligent reader who can understand the truth, for example; Stevens' journey and its true reason is also hidden.

A further limitation for the first person narration is that the readers are limited by the knowledge of Stevens. They are only allowed to see things through his eyes, for example; when Stevens reads Miss Kenton's letter, he believes that she loves to go back to Darlington Hall and that her marriage has come to an end. Gradually, the readers find out that his point of view is wrong. Moreover, one of the major problems of the novel is left unsolved because Stevens does not make up his mind utterly about it. Thus, the readers cannot say whether Lord Darlington is really a traitor or not.