Structure in *A Handful of Dust*

Chapter titles which suggest balance and circular motion:

- Du Cote de Chez Beaver
- English Gothic
- Hard Cheese on Tony
- English Gothic- II
- In Search of a City
- Du Cote de Chez Todd
- English Gothic- III

Linear:
Starting with Waugh’s short story, ‘The Man who Loved Dickens’, and working back through cause and effect to discover how the prisoner came to be in the clutches of Mr Todd

Structure of Classical Greek Tragedy:

- Rising action: Brenda’s growing estrangement from Tony
- (Double) climax: accidental death of John Andrew and Brenda’s desertion of Tony
- Falling action: Tony’s voyage to South America
- Catastrophe: Tony in the hands of Mr Todd

Circularity/ parallel action

- Hetton, framing the action/ the City in the jungle
- Mrs Beaver at beginning and end of action- greed and shallowness
- Brenda’s marriage to Jock/ early reference to what was likely in her younger days
- Brenda’s fling with Beaver/ Tony’s shipboard dalliance with Therese de Vitre
- Ill- matched ‘partners’ for Tony- Milly and Jenny Abdul Akbar
- Visitors to Hetton: extravagant and familiar Jenny Abdul Akbar and cool American, Mrs Rattery
- Tony’s exclusion from London society/ Indians’ rejection of Tony and Messenger
- Tony/ Mr Todd- isolated, feudal, paternalistic to servants/ Indians

Links with Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and *the Grail Quest*

- Myth/ legend/ fairy tale (The Arthurian legends)
- Rooms at Hetton
- Arthur/ Guinevere doomed to infidelity and dubious death
- Brenda as the enchanted Princess locked away
- Emptiness of modern urban life
- The fortune-tellers
- Failure of post-war society
- Escape to a different ‘world’
- Failure of conventional Christianity
- Technique of ‘overhearing’ conversations