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TSOTI THEMES

SURVIVAL

At the beginning of the novel, survival is attained in a savage and animalistic way. To survive Tsotsi kills and ribs innocent people in order to get money. As the story develops, so does the theme of survival. It becomes less of a physical survival and shifts to an emotional and spiritual survival. Not only does Tsotsi save himself but others too, he gives them hope. In saving others Tsotsi saves himself & his conscience. Examples are shown through the secondary characters of Morris and Boston and MIRAM. When Tsotsi lets Morris live after hours of stalking him, he saved Morris from his ultimate fear of death & saves his own kind-hearted personality, taking one step closer to becoming his old self, David. Tsotsi saves a Boston from death, by nourishment, like a mother figure. After beating him only two days before because he asked questions. Along with taking care of the man, Tsotsi is also asking questions to Boston about life. Tsotsi has abandoned one of his rules that made him the thug he is. These actions show that Tsotsi is becoming a new man, regaining and saving his soul. Fugard wants us to understand that survival is not only your physical presence but the mental state of yourself. You can be alive but your respect for others, positive attitude and kind-heartedness is diminished then you are dead as a soul.

REDEMPTION

At the outset of the novel Tsotsi is in a state of sin with his gang but through interactions with other he can redeem himself back to the young innocent boy he once was, David. Through caring for Boston, Tsotsi asks him questions pertaining to life in general. This nurturing and discussion allow Tsotsi to redeem himself to not only Boston but himself. Boston now knows Tsotsi is trying to fix himself and become a better person, therefore gaining respect for him. Next since Boston told Tsotsi he is looking for god, Tsotsi goes to the church and finds Isaiah, through their interaction Tsotsi learns more of God & what he and Christianity can do for you. Tsotsi agreed to return to the church later for a session. This shows us Tsotsi moving away from his state of sin and again moving closer to becoming David. Through these interactions Tsotsi is walking the road of redemption and becoming David. The final act of attains redemption is when Tsotsi attempts to save the baby at the end of the book. At the beginning of the novel Tsotsi was a life taker and by the end he moves to a life saver showing us the full circle redemption. The author wants us to learn that although you may commit acts that are uncivil or incorrect you can always redeem yourself if you choose so. Tsotsi made the choice to interaction with the people he did, he wanted to become David. Fugard knows if it's possible for him, it is for anyone.

DECENCY

We are first introduced to decency at the beginning of the novel when Tsotsi beats up Boston because Boston asks him questions about decency, referring to Tsotsi having none. Tsotsi doesn't know how to answer and he feels insecure, which causes him to lash out on Boston. Violence like this along with killing is what causes Tsotsi and his gang to lose their decency all together. Boston later points out that they have become sick, from life, from the lifestyle that they have participated in, lacking decency. As the story progresses Tsotsi learns he can attain decency in his life. He learns this again through the seminal moments throughout the novel. Morris is a huge interaction for Tsotsi. As the two talk and eventually Tsotsi allows Morris to live, Tsotsi does this because he recognizes that Morris too has a valuable life and this is an enormous step in attaining decency towards others. Tsotsi also attains decency in his life through another important moment, remembering his past. When Tsotsi takes in the full memory of the boy he used to be, he remembers what his life was like before he turned into a savage. Although the memory may not have been the most positive it gives him a target of who he needs to become again & this person is decent. Fugard wants us to learn that even the most lost, darkest human can turn their life around and become a new person with new values.