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Changing the Past

Bourdain's book entitled "Kitchen Confidential" offers vital insight into the life of the renowned chef expounding on the moments that he regards as the most profound ones in determining the course that his life was to take. The book expounds on the development of the keen interest in cooking and the subsequent turmoil that the aspiring cook had to endure to ensure that he was able to build a synonymous brand around himself. Moreover, the book expounds on several themes that are highlighted through the events of the life of Bourdain.



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The most resounding theme that seems to occur recurrently throughout the life of Bourdain is the theme of redemption which is featured through the various accounts of events which played a critical role in the formulation of the person that Bourdain was.

Redemption is a powerful theme that pertains to the ability of individuals to be able to learn from their actions and their repercussions such that they are able to make better decisions and choices about their lives. Through vivid description and elaboration of the events of his life, the chef is able to delineate to readers that it is possible to constantly improve the perspective and views about situations and circumstances in the lives of individuals if they choose to see the positive aspects. The first reference to the theme of redemption in the book pertains to the fact that the then young Bourdain was not at all amused by France when they first moved there (Bourdain). He goes on to define the initial town they settled in as being dull and uninteresting with extremely cold water, poor weather and a non-lively character to it (Bourdain). Additionally, he elaborates that the beaches were unwelcoming and unsuitable for swimming in addition to being defaced by the Nazi housing block that were built along the beach.

The unflattering description of the town could be translated to have extended to the attitude and perspective that Bourdain had of France upon their arrival having painted in in such negative light in his young brain. However, the poor and detrimental view of France that the young chef had were almost immediately alienated by the keen interest that the food in France evoked in the young boy (Bourdain). Bourdain explains that the cooking in America lacked a specific twist that gave French food an edge with regard to the impression on the palate together with the general experience that he got while consuming the food.

Additionally, the theme of redemption becomes more apparent and vivid when the author describes himself as being a spoilt, narcissistic, miserable individual who had no plan

whatsoever regarding his future. He additionally points out to the fact that he frequently engaged in drug abuse smoking bhang and sniffing cocaine in addition to the indulgence in activities that were evidently detrimental to their well-being (Bourdain). However, during this tumultuous period in his life, he was able to secure a job washing dishes at a restaurant that her friends worked in. The author describes that he was less than pleased with the job description that the title accompanied as he was expected to take up a bunch of menial roles at the restaurant encompassing the cleaning of shrimps, the picking of scallops among other jobs that seemed unattractive (Bourdain). He however is keen to note that it is these humble beginnings that he can attach his success in the restaurant business as a chef to. The author was able to secure a promotion from the job as a dishwasher to the salad station where the roles were more professional and “clean”.

Moreover, the theme of redemption can be traced through the change in the attitude of the young Bourdain who was initially inspired into the life of a chef by the vices that were committed by those who inspired him during his days at the Dreadnaught (Bourdain). With time and experience at his new position as at the salad station, he was able to note the value of hard work and professionalism and was motivated to emerge as the best in the station. However, as fate would have it, he was not lucky enough given that the restaurant was faltering and was acquired by a more successful restaurant. With an odd twist of events, he was selected and retained by the new owners where he admits to feeling intimidated by the level of skills and professionalism that the chefs at his new station had (Bourdain).

Additionally, the theme of redemption emerges in the text when the young chef went on to make a bad name and reputation for himself at his new restaurant in front of his new colleagues by rumbling about indulging in the vices that his previous workmates originally undertook

(Bourdain). Moreover, after an incidence in the kitchen in which he got burnt, he came off as lazy and unsuitable for the tasking role and responsibility he was poised to take and to this extent therefore, he fellow workmates had a detrimental view of him (Bourdain). However, despite the harrowing experience having embarrassed himself and managed to offend his new workmates, the author admits to formulating a plan and growing in determination to ensure that he was able to enhance his culinary skills. Additionally, from his experience he was able to acquire endurance and tolerance affirming that he would go through the most difficult of situations to ensure that he would emerge as the best.

Works Cited

Bourdain, Anthony. *Kitchen confidential*. A&C Black, 2013.