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The **Epitome** */I'pitəmi/*

Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Kedah Branch

Unleash the epitome of creative writers

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SYNOPSIS

The Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kedah branch is proud to present the first issue of its e-magazine, The Epitome, as our focus to highlight our commitment to contribute to the areas of creative writing.

THE EPITOME aims to provide a platform for writers, educators, academicians, poet, and researchers to share their ideas, findings, knowledge, and experience, particularly on various creative writing genres - personal essays, poetry, short stories, songs, movie scripts, plays, and innovative projects in four different languages (English, Bahasa Melayu, Mandarin, and Arabic).

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure and immense pride that we, the Academy of Language Studies at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kedah branch, extend our warmest welcome to all writers and readers to honor all 127 artistic masterpieces. This is indeed a tremendous achievement to commemorate our debut.

We are privileged to offer the platform for the writers to show their talents in creative writing in this magazine, which serves as a testament to our commitment to the area of personal essays, poetry, short stories, songs, movie scripts, plays, and innovative projects. Their invaluable contributions and unwavering commitment to academic excellence have played a vital role in shaping this magazine.

Thank you.

Best regards,

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“THREE DECADES OF DEAD POETS SOCIETY”

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All my life, I remember how people around me had quite frequently used the term “Carpe Diem”. However, I had never really known what the meaning was and quite frequently, I heard a few of my friends greet one of my lecturers in university with “Oh captain, My captain!” to which my lecturer was glad. Never once has it occurred to me that both of the sayings are references to the movie “Dead Poets Society”, a brilliant cinematic masterpiece which I have greatly regretted not watching sooner.

I remember watching this movie for the first time and after two emotional hours, I was left questioning “Have I lived my life being a slave of the system?”. Yes, I have. I have always been on the edge of uproar when it comes to the matters of putting our education system and social criticism into perspectives but I have never dared to speak my mind about it because I never thought that my opinion would matter or even if my voice would be heard. Witnessing how much of my life choices, my actions and the words I utter are all manipulated by the societal demands and the course of our education system, I realised that there are just so many things that I never get to achieve or how spontaneity has never been a choice of act because I was just too afraid to seize the day. I know now that since I've gotten this far in an academic course, I might as well use John Keating as my aspiration now that I am an educator. I will start the spark that could fire up a change in the system.

"Carpe diem. Seize the day, boys. Make your lives extraordinary."

This is the idea that the movie centres on, to encourage youths to live their lives to the fullest, to not live through any regrets and never succumb to social conformity. Social conformity is an ugly condition in which philosophies have become meaningless and ceased to be rules and pillars in which all members of society have to follow. The boys in Welton Academy were greatly tested between practising traditional

values, which by far had led them to being slaves of the pillars, never tasting the freedom of having an opinion or expressing themselves and accepting conservatives values which urge them to discover life as much as they can while they are still young. Likewise, in our country, and many others, there are certain living standards that we have to follow in order to be accepted, in order to avoid poisonous societal criticism. The way the society's mind works, the way they think and the way they judge got me thinking, who made them God? Who are these people we often refer to as society? Us. All of us. It does not matter if you stand for a different belief or concept, if you're not doing anything to voice out your mind and start the chain of change, everything will always be the same.

You're born, at the age of 5 you start schooling, later on you further your education in college or university, get a job, secure a career, settle down, start a family and you die. A typical setting formed by society to become a certified average individual. If you don't go through this, the society will have a different perspective on you. Most parents' minds are contaminated with the idea of this setting thus making it hard for them to accept their children's idea of the way to live their lives. Exactly like how it was portrayed in “Dead Poets Society”. Some of us have unenviable circumstances that force us to take a different route in life and some of us simply choose to the road less travelled by.

Now, differences are acceptable in the society only if you manage to make it on the news with your success. Society will say, it's okay to be different, but here's the catch, you have to go through a ridiculous amount of bashing, criticisms and oppression. All of these can lead one to suffer mental illness in which they slowly retreat to their dark side and loose the battle to their own demons. In the movie, Neil, who was totally burnt out by his father's rules and demands, decided to end his life at the age of 17. What's the price to pay for

parents to listen to their children rather than losing them forever? Mental illness causes the same damage as physical injury or even worse. The awareness on mental illness was artistically raised in this movie which was created over 34 years ago and yet, here we are in 2023, knowing very little about mental illness even constantly disregarding it. Basically, you have to play it safe to be accepted.

This movie was an incredible watch and it was worth every second that I spent watching it. Nevertheless, no matter how much praise and compliments this movie received, bear in mind that the messages and values this movie was trying to deliver has been going around for over 34 years. People all over the world would passionately yell out “Carpe Diem”, have it printed on t-shirts but the saying will only stay as a fun utterance never to be taken literally. Why do I think so? Simply because we can compare the events in this movie with our everyday lives and realise that nothing much has changed. However, I know every single soul this movie has touched are just waiting to explode like fireworks, inspiring others, making a change with every word that they utter and every idea that they plant.



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