



The
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Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Kedah Branch

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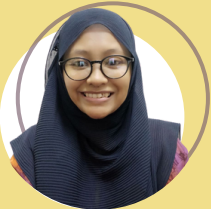


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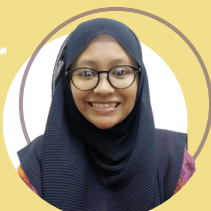
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synopsis

The Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Kedah is thrilled to announce the release of the third edition of its e-magazine, The Epitome. This publication exemplifies our steady dedication to fostering creativity in language and literature.

The primary objective of THE EPITOME is to offer a platform where writers, educators, scholars, poets, and researchers can come together to exchange their ideas, discoveries, expertise, and narratives. Our special focus revolves around an array of creative writing genres, encompassing Playwriting, Short stories, Songs, Speeches, Memoirs, Literary Journalism, Humour writing, Lyric essays, Innovative essays, and Personal essays, with a goal to embrace diverse linguistic expressions, with content available in four languages: English, Bahasa Melayu, Mandarin, and Arabic.

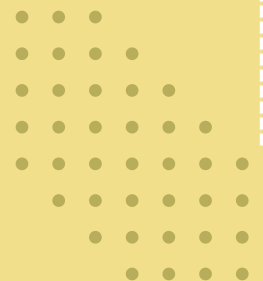




table of **contents:**

PREFACE

EDITOR'S NOTE

A Journey of Growth and Gratitude: My Internship Journey by Nurfarisya Hafiz	1
Another Chance by Tina Stephen Enggong & Ranee Atlas	3
As I Stood by Palestine by Sharina Saad	4
Bound & Broken (Absurd Theater Playwriting) by Iadid Ashrai & Mag Malik	6
Brian Lai, Our Eldest Child by Ting Su Ung	10
Embracing The Richness of Malaysian Culture: Four Standout Aspects (In My Opinion) by Piermauro Catarinella	12
From Zero to London: My Childhood Journey by Nurul Afiqah Binti Ahmad	14
In The Embrace of Memory: The Journey of Loss, Love and Legacy by Mashita Binti Abdul Jabar	15
In The Lecture Hall by Nor Azyyati Md Saad	16



Preface



Mr. Azlan Abdul Rahman

Head of Faculty
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Welcome to Epitome, the 3rd Issue – a collection of thoughts, reflections, and stories that encapsulate the essence of an academic's journey. As the pages unfold, you will embark on a thoughtful exploration of the human experience, woven through the threads of joy, sorrow, and everything in between.

In designing this compilation, our intention is to offer readers a mirror to their own experiences, inviting moments of reflection and connection. Epitome is not just a creative publication; it is an invitation to pause, reflect, and find quality in the shared tapestry of our existence.

Through these pages, the reader may encounter familiar landscapes of the heart and perhaps discover a transformed perspective on the beauty and complexity of academic life. Each piece within Epitome is a humble contribution to the ongoing dialogue of what it means to be human.

I extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have been a part of this journey – especially to all the contributors and the esteemed Epitome Editorial Team. Your involvement and presence surely added depth and meaning to this publication.

May Epitome serve as a companion, provoking thought and sparking moments of connection and collaboration.

Thank you for embarking on this literary voyage with us.

Editor-In-Chief



Creativity is intelligence having fun

Dear Epitome Community,

We are back for the third issue and enthusiastic to share with all of you the collection of creative writings crafted by dedicated and imaginative writers. In this third issue, we present a variety of articles ranging from playwriting to lyric essays, each offering a unique tone and style of writing. Thanks to all the creative and talented writers, we hope these pieces can inspire you in various ways.

We would like to extend our congratulations to all the inspiring writers for their valuable contributions and unwavering support. Many of these names are familiar to us, as some have been submitting their work since our first volume. Additionally, we would like to express our gratitude to the dedicated committee and reviewers for their time and expertise.

Thank you for being a part of our Epitome community.

Till the next volume,

Dr. Nur Syazwanie Mansor
Editor-in-Chief,
The Epitome

Embracing the Richness of Malaysian Culture: Four Standout Aspects (In My Opinion)

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After residing and working in Malaysia for over fifteen years, I can confidently say that this nation has truly become my home, and I identify as a genuine Malaysian citizen. My loved ones, interests, and daily life are firmly rooted here. The process of integrating myself with the Malaysians and their culture was not only effortless but also a natural evolution. Given my enduring fascination with studying diverse cultures, I aim to dedicate this paper to shining a spotlight on four aspects of the Malaysian lifestyle. These facets initially captured my attention and have seamlessly become an integral part of my daily life. Notably, these unique aspects are unfamiliar in Italy, my country of birth, education, and residence for many years.

Shoes Off Indoors:

Upon my first visit to the Academy of Language Studies, I observed an intriguing practice - everyone removing their shoes before entering the laboratory on the first floor - . This custom, unfamiliar to me initially, intrigued and delighted me simultaneously. The emphasis on hygiene, preventing the introduction of dirt from our shoes into work or living spaces, impressed me positively. Unfortunately, this practice is not widespread in Italy or other southern European countries, primarily due to historical reasons. For generations preceding and just after the Second World War, shoes held a fundamental role as a societal identifier - a sort of people's business card - . The social importance attached to shoes meant that it was customary to keep them on when entering houses. However, fortunately, this cultural norm is evolving, thanks to the newer generations who, inspired by Scandinavian practices, prefer to enter the house without shoes for hygiene reasons first and foremost. Shoes, as carriers of bacteria, contribute to dirtying floors and fostering diseases. Moreover, they are not always the epitome of comfort, and being barefoot aids in toe relaxation and overall foot health.

Low Voice Tone:

From my perspective, another commendable aspect of Malaysian culture is the calm and low tone in which people engage in conversation. Malaysians communicate softly, fostering a polite and amiable atmosphere even in bustling places like classrooms, buses, restaurants, or subway cars. This stands in stark contrast to the higher decibels often associated with human voices in Italy and other European countries - a stereotype, unfortunately, grounded in reality. Indeed, the perception of Italians expressing themselves loudly is not just a stereotype; it reflects an observable cultural difference in communication styles. In Malaysia, there is a shared understanding that there is no need to raise one's voice for everyone to hear. This cultural norm reflects a consideration for maintaining a calm and respectful communication environment, even in public spaces. Speaking with a low tone is, in my humble opinion, a positive expression of kindness. This practice not only preserves the speakers' privacy but also respects the broader environmental comfort of those around them. It is widely acknowledged that people generally feel more at ease in a tranquil setting compared to a noisy one. The consideration for others' comfort through a soft-spoken approach contributes to a more harmonious and pleasant social atmosphere.

Eating with Hands:

The sight of my friends indulging in a meal with their hands initially caught me off guard, considering my Western background. However, after overcoming some initial hesitation, I decided to give it a try and discovered that eating with bare hands not only heightened the taste of the food but also provided a sense of liberation. The act of using our hands in this context is not just a flavorful experience but also a healthy one. It curbs the tendency to eat hastily, encouraging a more mindful approach where we focus on each bite, savor it with our fingers, and blend it harmoniously with other elements on the plate. Dining with hands establishes a sensory connection with food, prompting us to be present and attentive to our nutritional intake. Introducing this practice to Italy has posed challenges, considering that such customs are not widely embraced. Nonetheless, I value and embrace the cultural distinctions between Malaysia and Western Europe.

Smiling as a Social Norm:

One of the aspects that truly endeared Malaysia to me is the universal practice of smiling among people of all ages and social backgrounds. Whether in the office, classroom, post office, bank, or any public place, people exchange smiles, even with strangers. I vividly remember experiencing this warmth for the first time in a bank years ago, and it left a lasting impression on me. This friendly and open display of smiles is quite rare among strangers in Italy or Western Europe. In these regions, a smile from a stranger might be misunderstood as a romantic or sexual advance, potentially leading to negative reactions. However, I have grown to appreciate and reciprocate this gesture, as it contributes to kind and pleasant interpersonal relationships. In my opinion, receiving a smile is a wonderful feeling - it doesn't matter from whom - because it instantly makes us feel at ease and welcomed. Moreover, a smile has profound effects on our well-being, promoting tonic muscle relaxation, and improving tissue oxygenation and blood circulation, particularly in the areas of the heart and lungs. Additionally, it triggers the release of dopamine and endorphins in our brain, often referred to as "the happiness drug". These hormones induce feelings of relaxation and happiness, enhancing our overall mood. I genuinely hope that one day, Italians and Europeans will embrace this cultural norm of smiling at strangers, even though I acknowledge that cultural norms can be challenging to change. I am genuinely glad and proud to have adopted Malaysian culture.

The End.



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