



The **Epitome** */i'pitəmi/*

Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Kedah Branch

Theme,
**THE POWER OF EXPRESSION",
"REFLECTIONS & REALITIES:**

**Volume 1
Issue 5**

2025



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Epitome
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eISSN 3009 – 0075

Published by:
UiTM Cawangan Kedah,
Pn. Razanawati Nordin, Chief Editor,
UiTM Cawangan Kedah, Kampus Sg. Petani, 08400 Merbok,
Kedah
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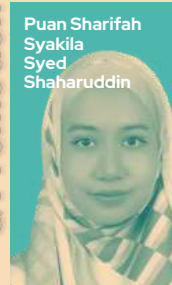


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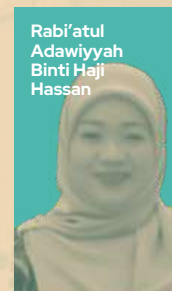
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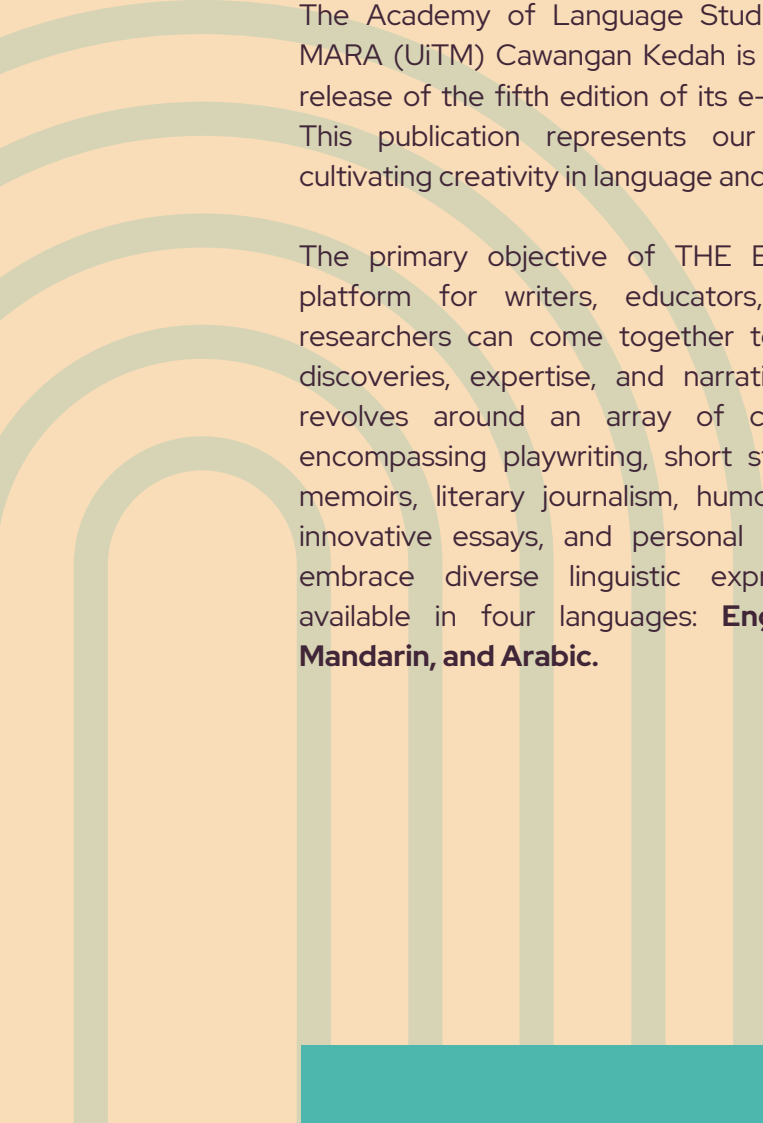
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Synopsis



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

The primary objective of THE EPITOME is to offer a platform for 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.**





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Preface

Mr. Azlan Abdul Rahman

Head of Faculty
Akademi Pengajian Bahasa (APB)
UiTM Kedah Branch

Welcome to the 5th issue of Epitome. This time, we step into a world where reflections shape realities, and where the simple act of expression holds incredible power.

Our theme, "Reflections & Realities: The Power of Expression," captures the spirit of this collection. It reminds us that every creative work is more than just an arrangement of words – it is a mirror, a window, and a bridge. Within these pages, you will encounter a rich variety of voices, each offering a unique glimpse into personal journeys, dreams, questions, and truths. Together, they form a tapestry that reflects both the world as it is and the world as we imagine it could be.

At Epitome, we believe that creativity is not just about telling stories; it's about giving shape to experiences that might otherwise remain unspoken. Through story that stirs the heart, stories that spark new ideas, and essays that invite reflection, we celebrate the courage it takes to put thoughts into words and share them with others.

This issue is not just a showcase of talent – it is an invitation. An invitation to pause, to listen, and to engage with the many realities presented here. It asks us to look beyond the surface, to find meaning in unexpected places, and to recognize the universal threads that connect us all through the simple yet profound act of expression.

As you journey through this edition, we hope you find pieces that resonate with you, challenge your perspective, and awaken new ideas. May these reflections inspire you to embrace your own realities – and perhaps even to express them in your own way.

Thank you for allowing Epitome to be part of your reading experience. We are honoured to share these voices with you.

Happy reading!



Editor'snote

Presenting the fifth edition of THE EPITOME, a humble yet heartfelt collection of voices that reflect who we are, what we've experienced, and the truths we dare to express.

This publication's theme, "Reflections & Realities: The Power of Expression", embraces the essence of storytelling in all its forms—raw, whimsical, honest, and imaginative. Within these pages, our contributors navigate the labyrinth of identity, nostalgia, struggle, resilience, and creativity. Whether through memoirs, fiction, poetry, satire, or cultural musings, each piece represents a unique lens into the human condition, where language becomes both mirror and window—reflecting ourselves and revealing the world.

In a publication that welcomes expression in three languages—English, Bahasa Melayu, and Mandarin—we are reminded of the richness that lies in linguistic diversity. From humorous tales of online shopping to haunting narratives of secrets and self-discovery, from kampung chronicles to cross-cultural encounters, THE EPITOME offers a space for voices that often go unheard to finally be seen, read, and felt.

My deepest appreciation goes to the writers who have entrusted us with their stories, the editorial and design teams whose passion has brought this issue to life, and our readers who continuously support this platform as a space for creative and reflective exploration.

May this edition inspire you to reflect, to connect, and most of all—to express.

Warmly,
Dr. Nur Syazwanie Mansor
Chief Editor
THE EPITOME 2025



Labyrinth Of Lies: Confronting Secrets in the Final Semester

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Chapter 1: The Shocking Announcement

It's the last semester for five brilliant students: Amira, the perfectionist leader; Danial, the comedian who hides his insecurities; Farah, the shy genius; Hakim, the charming manipulator; and Nadia, the quiet observer. They all admire their lecturer, Dr. Karim, a mysterious and highly respected figure. One day, Dr. Karim announces, "Your final assignment will be an individual project worth 100% of your grade. But this is not an ordinary project—it's about who you are. You have one month to complete it."

Later that day, they each receive an envelope with a mysterious note: "The truth will free you, but lies will destroy you." Attached is a clue tied to their darkest secrets. Amira's note mentions her betrayal of a best friend, Danial's reveals how his jokes caused harm, Farah's hints at stolen credit for a discovery, Hakim's exposes a broken promise, and Nadia's simply says, "You know." Eyes wide with fear, they realize this is no ordinary project.

Moral: Success built on lies will eventually come back to haunt you.

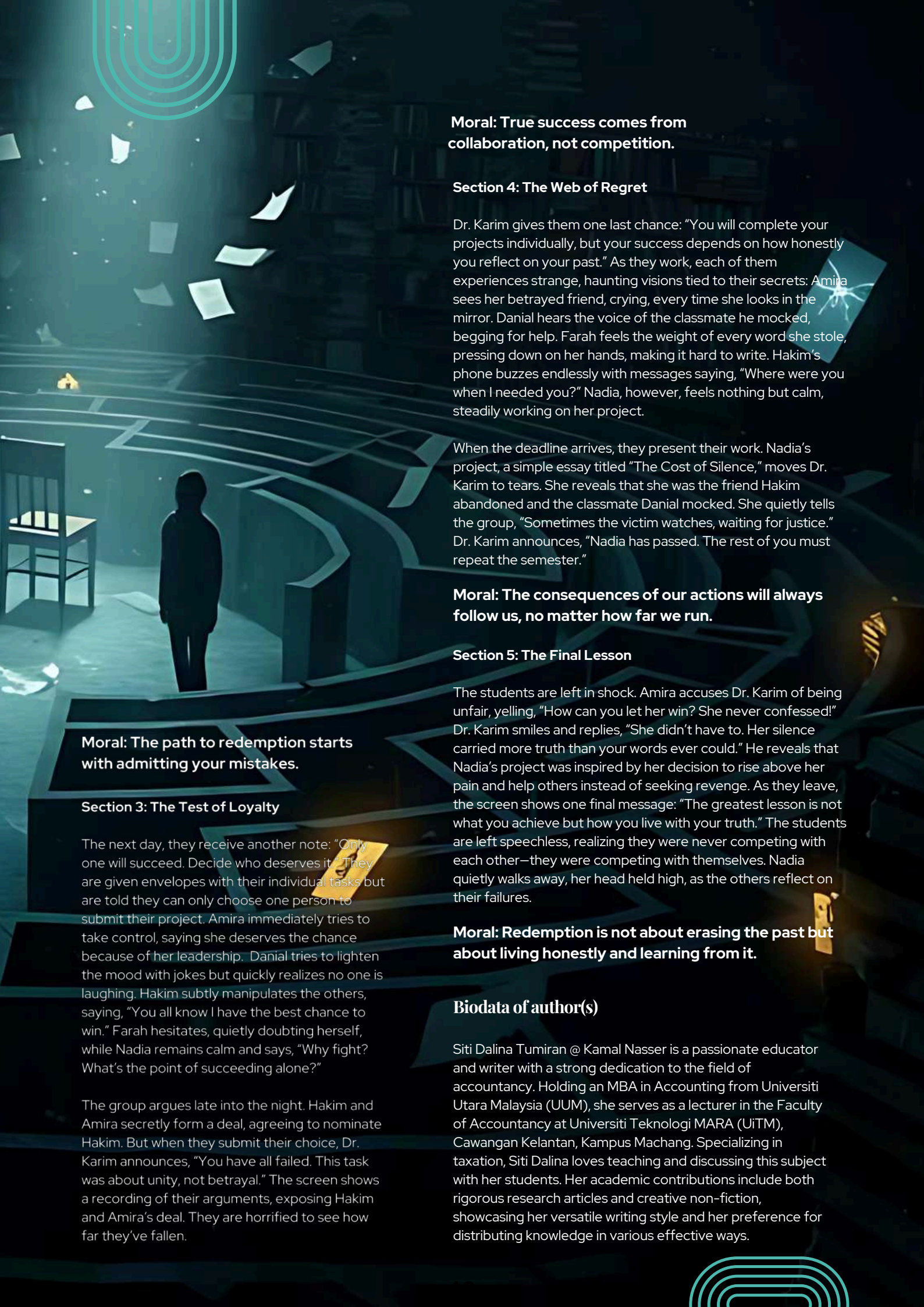
Section 2: The Room of Confessions

A week later, Dr. Karim calls them to his office, but instead of the usual lecture, they find themselves locked in a dark, soundproof room. A voice plays through a speaker: "You will stay here until the truth is revealed. Each lie you tell will cost you." The lights flicker on, revealing five chairs in a circle. A screen in the corner reads:

"CONFESSION TIME: 30 MINUTES."

Amira goes first, claiming she has nothing to hide. Suddenly, the screen flashes, "LIE DETECTED." The room shakes, and Amira's chair tips dangerously, almost throwing her off. Panicked, she admits she spread rumors to ruin her friend's scholarship application. The screen stops flashing.

One by one, they confess: Danial admits to mocking a classmate who dropped out. Farah reveals she published someone else's assignment as her own. Hakim confesses to promising help to a friend but vanishing when it mattered. Nadia says nothing, but the screen shows "TRUTH." The voice ends with, "Lies are only the beginning of destruction." They leave the room, shaken.



Moral: True success comes from collaboration, not competition.

Section 4: The Web of Regret

Dr. Karim gives them one last chance: "You will complete your projects individually, but your success depends on how honestly you reflect on your past." As they work, each of them experiences strange, haunting visions tied to their secrets: Amira sees her betrayed friend, crying, every time she looks in the mirror. Danial hears the voice of the classmate he mocked, begging for help. Farah feels the weight of every word she stole, pressing down on her hands, making it hard to write. Hakim's phone buzzes endlessly with messages saying, "Where were you when I needed you?" Nadia, however, feels nothing but calm, steadily working on her project.

When the deadline arrives, they present their work. Nadia's project, a simple essay titled "The Cost of Silence," moves Dr. Karim to tears. She reveals that she was the friend Hakim abandoned and the classmate Danial mocked. She quietly tells the group, "Sometimes the victim watches, waiting for justice." Dr. Karim announces, "Nadia has passed. The rest of you must repeat the semester."

Moral: The consequences of our actions will always follow us, no matter how far we run.

Section 5: The Final Lesson

The students are left in shock. Amira accuses Dr. Karim of being unfair, yelling, "How can you let her win? She never confessed!" Dr. Karim smiles and replies, "She didn't have to. Her silence carried more truth than your words ever could." He reveals that Nadia's project was inspired by her decision to rise above her pain and help others instead of seeking revenge. As they leave, the screen shows one final message: "The greatest lesson is not what you achieve but how you live with your truth." The students are left speechless, realizing they were never competing with each other—they were competing with themselves. Nadia quietly walks away, her head held high, as the others reflect on their failures.

Moral: Redemption is not about erasing the past but about living honestly and learning from it.

Moral: The path to redemption starts with admitting your mistakes.

Section 3: The Test of Loyalty

The next day, they receive another note: "Only one will succeed. Decide who deserves it." They are given envelopes with their individual tasks but are told they can only choose one person to submit their project. Amira immediately tries to take control, saying she deserves the chance because of her leadership. Danial tries to lighten the mood with jokes but quickly realizes no one is laughing. Hakim subtly manipulates the others, saying, "You all know I have the best chance to win." Farah hesitates, quietly doubting herself, while Nadia remains calm and says, "Why fight? What's the point of succeeding alone?"

The group argues late into the night. Hakim and Amira secretly form a deal, agreeing to nominate Hakim. But when they submit their choice, Dr. Karim announces, "You have all failed. This task was about unity, not betrayal." The screen shows a recording of their arguments, exposing Hakim and Amira's deal. They are horrified to see how far they've fallen.

Biodata of author(s)

Siti Dalina Tumiran @ Kamal Nasser is a passionate educator and writer with a strong dedication to the field of accountancy. Holding an MBA in Accounting from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), she serves as a lecturer in the Faculty of Accountancy at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Cawangan Kelantan, Kampus Machang. Specializing in taxation, Siti Dalina loves teaching and discussing this subject with her students. Her academic contributions include both rigorous research articles and creative non-fiction, showcasing her versatile writing style and her preference for distributing knowledge in various effective ways.



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9 773009 007004