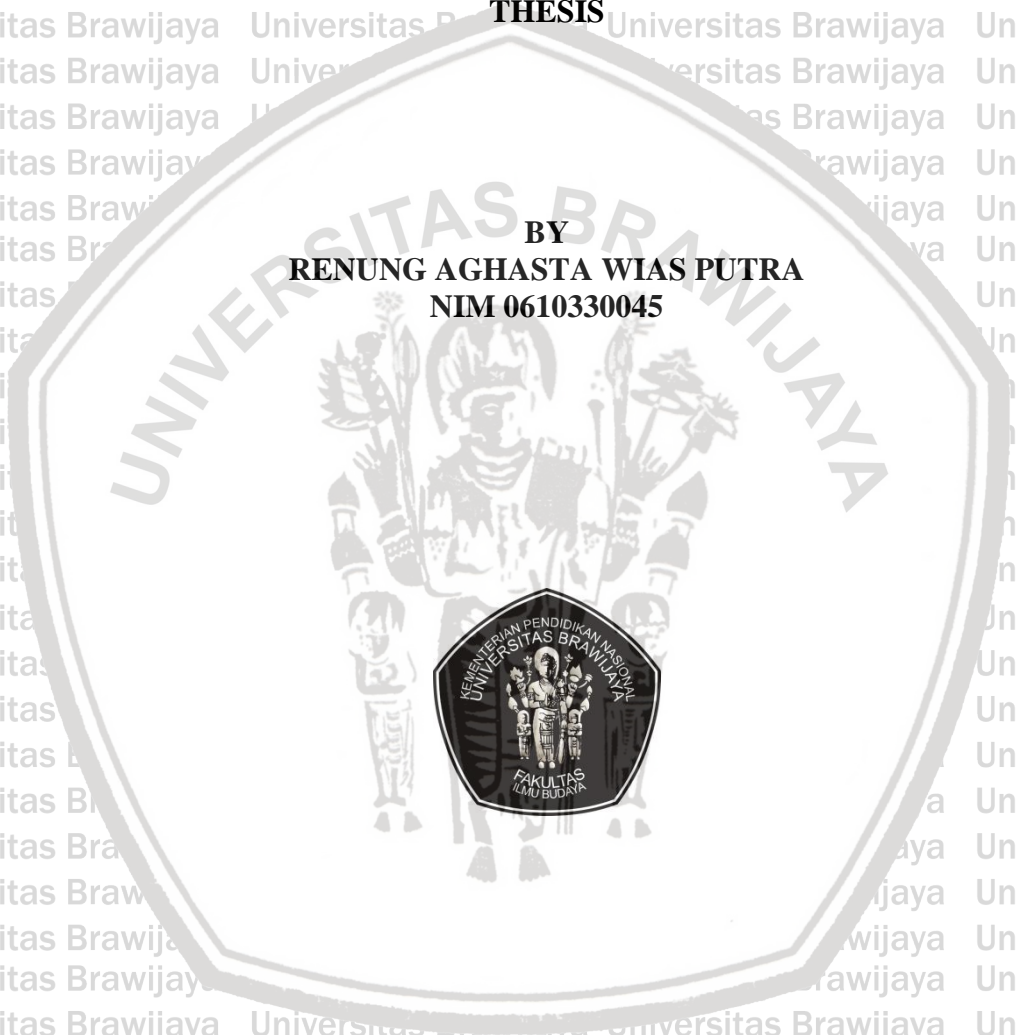


**REBELLIONS TOWARD “THE FOUR PILLARS”  
PORTRAYED IN THE MOVIE  
ENTITLED *DEAD POETS SOCIETY***

**THESIS**

**BY  
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**STUDY PROGRAM OF ENGLISH  
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE  
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**2010**

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**THESIS**

**Presented to  
University of Brawijaya  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra***

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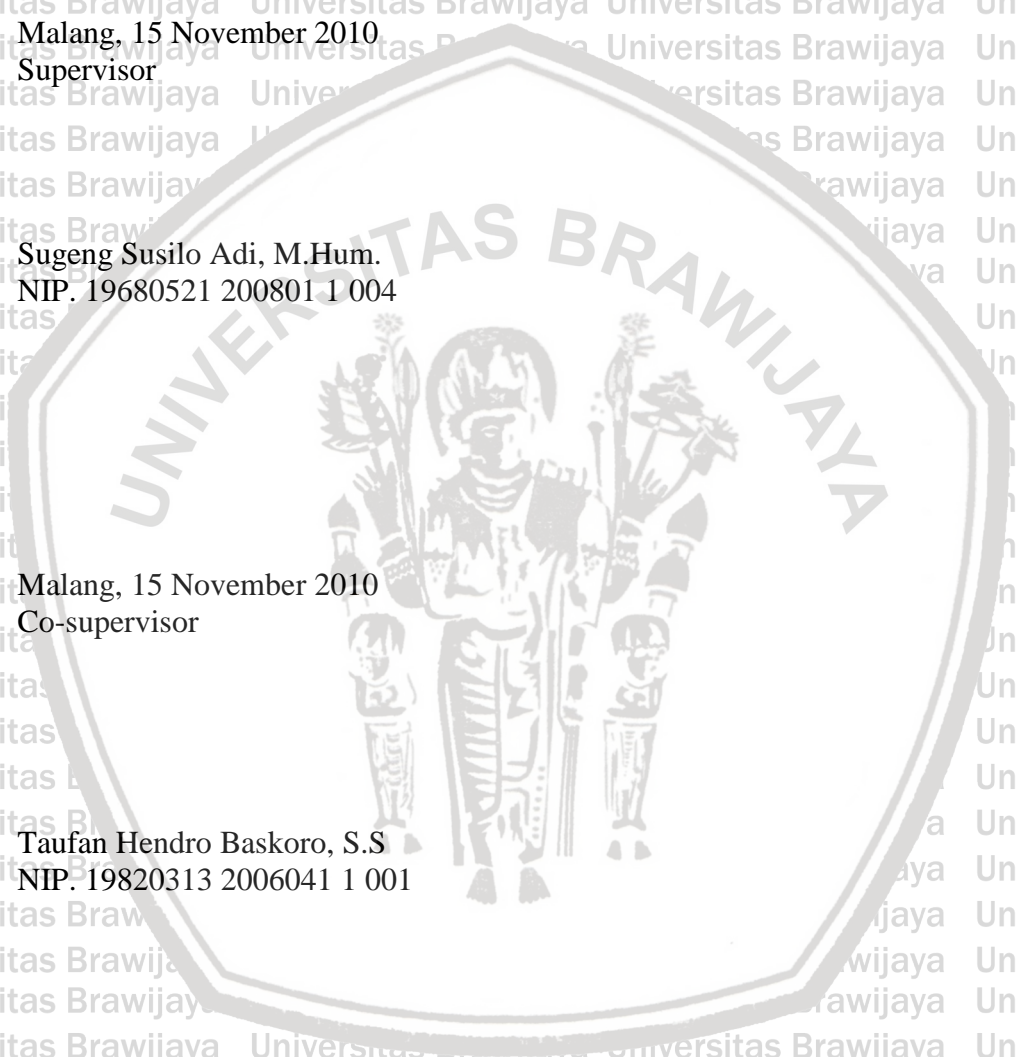
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Hopefully, this thesis can enrich the development of research in existentialism field and may become the inspiration for others to do a related research or study.

The writer

## DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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## ABSTRACT

Putra, Renung Aghasta Wias. 2010. **Rebellions Toward “The Four Pillars” Portrayed In The Movie Entitled Dead Poets Society**. English Study Program, Language and Literature Department, Faculty of Culture Studies, University of Brawijaya.

Supervisor: Sugeng Susilo Adi

Co-supervisor: Taufan Hendro Baskoro

Keywords: human existence, existentialism, Dead Poets Society (DPS), “The Four Pillars”, rebellion, and *carpe diem* (seize the day).

Human as a special living thing is different from other God’s creatures, like animals or goods. Human can speak, think, and decide something. The different is something that usually we call as ‘human existence’. It means that human has their own existence and only human who is aware of their existence and capable of questioning it. Talking about human existence, there is a theory that has a relation with it, named ‘existentialism’. In the very simple understanding, existentialism is a study of existence. The focus of the existentialism is about how people give their own meaning in their life through their own choices and actions. We can say that humans really exist if they can understand and fulfill their meaning and their roles as individuals in spending their lives. In other words, people who do not understand their meaning are considered as goods. They cannot give their own meaning as individuals, they do not know why they exist, what their roles are, and for what they exist.

Dealing with existentialism, there is a movie entitled *Dead Poets Society* (DPS). In this movie, we will see the main aspect about the preparation school system called “The Four Pillars” (Tradition, Honor, Discipline, and Excellence). The major theme in this movie is about the rebellion towards these Pillars shown by John Keating (the main character) and several boys who come to be the DPS’s members. His methods in teaching is affected by the spirit of Latin words *carpe diem* (seize the day). Later, that spirit makes his students become a free thinker and urges them to do what they really want. That is why, this study tries to describe what the rebellion towards “The Four Pillars” is and also what the influences of the *carpe diem* spirit to the characters are.

Finally, the rebellions in this movie are fulfilled by Keating through his teaching methods which are clearly against the ‘mainstream’ at Welton academy. The rebellions that emphasize on how we should think differently and always look at another point of view. This movie also shows the influences of *carpe diem* spirit for the students who finally can think freely and do what they really want based on their own desires. Even though Keating is finally fired from Welton because of Neil’s death, the film does not end with the defeat of the students. It is Todd who initiates an open demonstration of defiance in the class room, greeting him “Oh Captain. My Captain!”, climbs on top of his desk to thus honor the fired teacher. One by one other students follow his daring example proudly, and thank the man who has awakened their minds.

## ABSTRAK

Putra, Renung Aghasta Wias. 2010. **Pemberontakan Terhadap “Empat Pilar” Dalam Film Berjudul *Dead Poets Society***. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Brawijaya.  
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Kata Kunci: eksistensi manusia, eksistensialisme, *Dead Poets Society (DPS)*, “Empat Pilar”, pemberontakan, *carpe diem* (raihlah kesempatan).

Manusia sebagai makhluk yang istimewa berbeda dari ciptaan Tuhan yang lainnya, seperti binatang atau benda lain. Manusia dapat berbicara, berpikir, dan memutuskan sesuatu. Perbedaan yang biasa disebut ‘eksistensi manusia’. Maksudnya bahwa manusia memiliki eksistensinya sendiri dan hanya mereka yang menyadari hal itu, serta dapat mempertanyakannya. Berbicara tentang eksistensi manusia, terdapat sebuah teori yang berkaitan dengan hal itu yang disebut ‘eksistensialisme’. Dalam arti sederhana, eksistensialisme adalah ilmu tentang eksistensi. Pokok dari teori ini adalah bagaimana manusia memberikan artinya sendiri melalui pilihan dan tindakan mereka. Manusia dapat dikatakan benar-benar eksis/ada jika mereka mengerti dan memenuhi arti dan perannya sebagai individu dalam menjalani hidup mereka. Dengan kata lain, mereka yang tidak memahaminya dianggap sebagai barang/benda dan tidak dapat memberikan arti sebagai individu, mereka tidak tahu kenapa mereka ada, apa peran mereka, dan untuk apa mereka ada.

Berkaitan dengan eksistensialisme, ada sebuah film berjudul *Dead Poets Society (DPS)*. Di film ini kita akan melihat aspek utama mengenai sebuah sistem sekolah persiapan yang disebut “Empat Pillar” (Tradisi, Kehormatan, Disiplin, dan Keutamaan). Tema utama dalam film ini tentang pemberontakan terhadap “Empat Pilar” ini oleh John Keating (tokoh utama) dan beberapa murid yang tergabung dalam DPS. Cara mengajarnya yang dilandasi oleh semangat *carpe diem* (raihlah kesempatan) membuat murid-muridnya menjadi pemikir bebas dan membuat mereka melakukan apa yang benar-benar mereka kehendaki berdasarkan keinginan mereka sendiri. Itulah kenapa skripsi ini mencoba untuk menjelaskan apa saja pemberontakan terhadap “Empat Pilar” itu dan dampak apa saja dari *carpe diem* terhadap tokoh-tokoh dalam film ini.

Akhirnya, pemberontakan dalam film ini dilakukan oleh Keating melalui metode mengajarnya yang sangat jelas menentang ‘mainstream’ di Welton akademi. Pemberontakan yang menekankan untuk berpikir beda dan selalu melihat sesuatu dari sudut pandang berbeda. Film ini juga menunjukkan dampak dari *carpe diem* terhadap murid-murid yang akhirnya dapat berpikir bebas dan melakukan apa yang benar-benar mereka inginkan. Walau pada akhirnya Keating dipecat atas tuduhan kematian Neil, tapi film ini tidak serta merta diakhiri dengan kekalahan para murid-muridnya. Adalah Todd yang memulai perlawanan dengan menaiki meja, memanggil “*Oh Captain. My Captain!*” memberikan penghormatan. Satu persatu murid-murid yang lain mengikutinya dengan bangga, berterimakasih pada orang yang telah menyadarkan pikiran mereka.



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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter of Introduction, the writer provides some parts of the study, such as (1) Background of the Study, (2) Problems of the Study, and also (3) Purposes of the Study.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Talking about human in general is the same as discussing about the 'special-living thing'. Human as a special living thing is different from other living things. Human has their own characteristics. They can think, move, talk, speak, and so on. But however, the most significant difference is that human has their own existence and only human who is aware of their existence and capable of questioning it. In other words, we can say that human is not animal that just behaves based on the instinct and cannot think to give a meaning. Human must be able to consider which one is good and which one is bad. This is the main reason why human is different from another God's creature, such as animal. We often call the difference as human existence.

In general, human existence is related to existentialism. In simple words, existentialism is the study of existence. Jean Paul Sartre says that existentialism is humanism. His famous axiom "existence preceded essence", means that everything in this world begins with existence that causes their essence. Humans' essence is determined by their existence. Actually, this axiom was influenced by

Nietzsche's statement "God is dead". Sartre thinks if humans already exist in God's thought or in other words humans have been come up in God's idea, what if there is no God? It means that if God does never exist, so there is no idea in God's thought to be the qualification for human being, or radically, there will be no human essence. Sartre said that there is no human essence because there is no God who creates it. It emphasizes that actually humans are left alone and free to create and re-create their own existence, again and again, through their choices and their actions.

Panza and Gale also say that existentialism is the philosophy that makes life possible. It means that when people are aware of their existence and start to question it, people understand about their meaning and roles as individuals to spend their life. Panza and Gale added that philosophy develops when a society gets to the point at which at least some of the people within it have the leisure not only to sit around asking the questions, but also to work out detailed, reasoned responses. People start to think and asking their existence when they do nothing. They focus, concern, and slowly realize why they exist and for what they exist.

Further, Panza and Gale (2008, p.13) say:

Existentialism is the study of existence. Existentialism is not the study of everything that exists, but it is the study of existence itself, it is the study of what it means for something to exist at all as opposed to not existing. It is also the study of what it means for something, as opposed to nothing, to exist at all. Of course, the primary focus of existentialism is a particular kind of existence, the kind of existence that includes existing things like people, because people are aware of their existence and capable of questioning it.

Based on what Panza and Gale stated above, it is true that people with their existence will always develop as the consequence of the development in their life.

However, as the human being, the fundamental questions that should be asked are:

Where did we come from? Why are we here? Why do people exist? Why don't people be created to be not exist? These questions have some conclusions about why human being is created and why human being is existed. Even though people cannot find the definite answers, one thing that can be concluded is that this is about the existence of human being.

Those existential questions above can only be asked by human being. The reasons are because people are aware of their existence and capable of questioning it, and because people have their own existence. People who understand and realize their existence, they will realize their functions and roles as the individuals as well. They know their meaning as opposed to know nothing. It means that people who do not understand their meaning are considered as goods. They cannot give their own meaning as individuals, they do not know why they exist, what their roles are, and for what they exist.

Kierkegaard in Dagun (1990) says that one's existence means he is able to decide something to set out his life. Therefore, one who does not dare to make a decision is not living in existence in the real meaning. From this statement, it can be concluded that people who exist should do something in his life to find out the meaning of their own selves. It is called exist because people know what they should do, what their roles are, and for what they live.

Dealing with the existentialism, the writer chooses the movie entitled *Dead Poets Society* as the topic in this study since it concerns with the existentialism, human existence, and also teaching about the meaning of the philosophical statement *carpe diem*. In this movie, we will see how the meaning of human being is shown and explored. *Carpe diem* is a phrase from a Latin poem by Horace. It is popularly translated as 'seize the day'. *Carpe* means "pick, pluck, pluck off, gather", but Horace uses the word to mean "enjoy, make use of". In Horace, the phrase is part of the longer *Carpe diem quam minime credula postero* which means "seize the day, trusting as little as possible in the future". It means we have to use the chance that we have today well and wisely and not to give our hope too high for our future. We just need to do what we can do today. The word *carpe diem* has a great connection with existentialism since this statement or axiom is having a lot of effects/influences to the meaning of the existence of human being. The meaning beyond the *carpe diem* statement in this movie is shown by the rebellions toward "The Four Pillars". "The Four Pillars" in this movie are Tradition, Honor, Discipline, and Excellence.

Tradition has relation with the will to do things the way they have been done in the past. The value is about stability. It means that something which becomes tradition will be difficult to be changed or replaced. Honor is a matter of inner and personal integrity. Honor is related to something prestigious and self-pride. The focus of honor is not about what is done, but it is about how or the way to do something. Discipline is the control or repression of personal impulses, instincts, and desires in order to insure behavior and compliance with established social

expectations or the demands of authorities. Discipline talks about self-controlled and mostly discusses about obedience. Excellence is to be outstanding. Excellence is not only concentrates in doing things, but the emphasis is doing things well. It is about to be perfect and extraordinary.

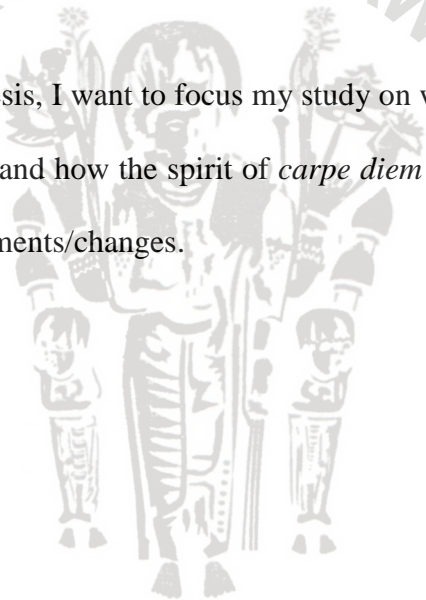
Petersen (2001, p.10) says that Rebellion is Mechanisms. Mechanisms are specific causal patterns that explain individual actions over a wide range of settings; they are intermediary between laws and description. It means that rebellion happened because someone have a different point of view or disagree with the established rules. Someone rebels something to criticize or at least build a new perception about something new.

The rebellions in this movie are shown by John Keating (the teacher and also the main character in this movie) through his teaching methods. What he teaches are absolutely different or it can be said against "The Four Pillars". With his unconventional teaching methods, he inspires his students to act as individuals. He encourages them to think for themselves, to find out new points of view, to discover their own ways and feelings and of course to seize the day. The rebellions toward "The Four Pillars" shown in this movie explain what actually people can do and should do in spending their life to give a meaning in their own life. In case of this movie, what Keating do in his class causes the students to have a new point of view and a great intention of what they want. Therefore, the meaning of human existence and existentialism were fulfilled through Keating's teaching methods. In this movie also, the rebellions will be done by several students through their decisions and actions based on the spirit of *carpe diem*.

Those several students do their own rebellions based on what they really want, so that they can give a meaning in their own life.

The reasons why should “The Four Pillars” is discussed are because, first, this movie is mostly discussing about these aspects. Second, through these aspects, Keating tries to encourage the students not just to follow what the rules say, but more in how they learn to be a free man, how they think for themselves, and how they give a meaning for themselves. The last because these “Four Pillars” are the dominant reflection of the preparatory school system which John Keating wants to change.

Finally, in this thesis, I want to focus my study on what the rebellions toward “The Four Pillars” are and how the spirit of *carpe diem* (seize the day) influences the characters developments/changes.





## 1.2 Problems of the Study

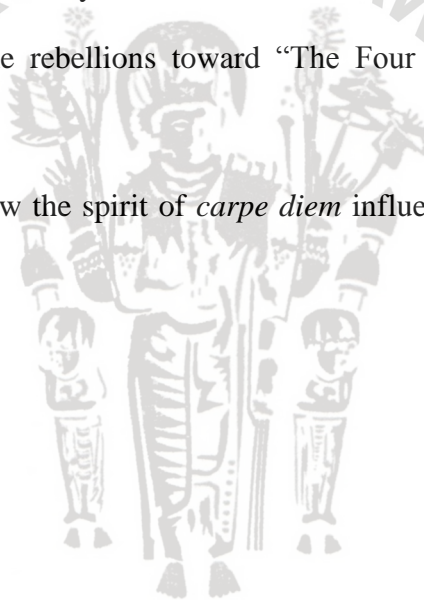
Based on the background the writer stated previously, the problems of the study are:

1. What rebellions toward “The Four Pillars” are portrayed in this movie?
2. How does the spirit of *carpe diem* influence the characters in this movie?

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The purposes of the study are:

1. To describe the rebellions toward “The Four Pillars” portrayed in this movie.
2. To describe how the spirit of *carpe diem* influences the characters in this movie.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter of Review of Related Literature, the writer provides (1)

Theoretical Framework and (2) Previous Study to support this Study.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

To strongly build my analytical framework, in this chapter, I will use Existentialism approach and some other theories that are relevant with my study, such as (1) Theory of Existence, (2) *Carpe Diem* Axiom, (3) Theory of Rebellion, (4) Theory of Tradition, (5) Theory of Honor, (6) Theory of Discipline, (8) Theory of Excellence, and (9) Theory of Film Studies. In this chapter, I will also provide a brief description of *Dead Poets Society* the movie.

##### 2.1.1 A Brief Description of *Dead Poets Society*

*Dead Poets Society* (DPS) film as the source of the data is one of great films about education in America. America, especially in north region, still uses this film as the role model of American teaching process for senior high school until now. This script of this film won the Oscar for the best screenplay in 1990 and it has received the other 13 awards and 14 nominations. The script written by Tom Schulman and the film directed by Peter weir.

The main characters in this movie are divided into two. The first, John Keating is the English teacher of Welton Academy in 1959 who teaches his students to follow their own hearts through the spirit of *carpe diem* (seize the day) instead of being traditional and strict. The other main characters are several of his students who take his lessons to heart and resurrect the Dead Poets Society, a secret club that meets late at night to read and discuss poetry in the Indian cave.

Mr. Keating's students who follow DPS members are Charlie Dalton, Knox Overstreet, Todd Anderson, Neil Perry, Cameron, Meeks, and Pitts. Charlie is the student whose name changes into Nuwanda. Knox is a boy who finds the girl of his dreams and never gives up getting her love. Todd is extremely shy student but tries to come out of his shell. The other main character of the member is Neil who decides to play the part of 'Puck' (the main character) in "Midsummer Night's Dream" against the wishes of his father, who dictates Neil's life entirely; this thing affects Neil's life until he dies in suicide. The next character is Cameron.

This boy is the most obedient student among the DPS's members. And the last are Meeks and Pitts as the students who understood Keating's teaching about *carpe diem* but they did not really have opportunity to prove it. In this film, the boys' introduction to *carpe diem* led to happiness for all of the DPS members. All of them follow their own desires, enjoy their life, and free from Welton Academy chains.

The film begins with a processional march of the students into the main auditorium of the school, where teachers and parents are awaiting the address of the headmaster Mr. Nolan, who inaugurates the new school year by reminding

everyone of the high standards of the institution, and the school's high success rate in sending its graduates to Ivy League universities. Students carry banners on which are embroidered "The Four Pillars" of Welton's pedagogical programs: Tradition, Honor, Discipline, and Excellence. Later on, the boys satirize these principles as Travesty, Horror, Decadence, and Excrement.

Among the teachers, the boys meet on their first day of class is the new English teacher, Mr. Keating, who tells the students that they call him "O Captain! My Captain!" (the title of Walt Whitman poem) if they feel daring. His lessons are totally different with Welton standards, taking them out of the classroom to focus on the idea of *carpe diem* (to seize their day when they young). To emphasize this point, Keating makes the students look at the old photographs of former Welton students that decorate the hallways and say:

"They are not that different than any of you, are they? There's hope in their eyes, just like in yours. They believe themselves destined for wonderful things, just like many of you. Well, where are those smiles now, boys? What of that hope?"

The students are sobered by what Keating is saying. Keating continues to say:

"Did most of them not wait until it was too late before making their life into even one iota of what they were capable? In chasing the almighty deity of success did they not squander their boyhood dreams? Most of those gentlemen are fertilizing daffodils now. However, if you get very close, boys, you can hear them whisper. Go ahead, lean in. Hear it? (Whispering) Carpe Diem, lads. Seize the day. Make your life extraordinary!"

In a later class, Keating has one of the boys (Neil) read the instruction to the poetry textbook which describes how to place the quality of a poem on a scale, and give number, a process that was popular in literacy circles at that time. Keating, much to the amazement of the students, finds the idea ridiculous, and has

them rip out the introduction pages. In the end, he has the students stand on his desk as reminder to look at the world in different way or point of view.

The rest of the movie is a process of awakening, in which the boys discover the authority can and must always act as a guide, but the only place where one can find out their true identity is within them. To that end, the boys secretly resurrect an old literary club to which Mr. Keating was a member called Dead Poets Society. However, when the Academy (Mr. Nolan) learns of its existence, they demand to know who is involved to punish them for destabilize the school.

The free thinking brings trouble for one boy, Neil, who decides to take a part in acting rather than to study medicine, the career his father chooses for him. Mr. Keating advices Neil to tell his father how he feels before starring in a play "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in which Neil had the role of Puck, but he could not bear facing his father who is a highly dictator man. After Neil's brilliant performance failed to please his father who, instead, decides to force him away from acting and into Harvard for studying science, Neil commits to suicide with his father's handgun.

When the news of his death comes into Welton, Neil's close friends have no doubt that Mr. Perry is the real killer. "Even if Mr. Perry didn't shoot him, he killed him. They have to know that", Todd exclaims. Not surprisingly, the school authorities take a different view. Prompted by Mr. Perry, who had disliked Keating and his philosophy for some time, the headmaster promises "a thorough investigation" of the Dead Poets Society club and John Keating's alleged role in it. To avoid negative repercussions for the school, Nolan needs a scapegoat on

whom everything can be blamed. Nolan also desires the complete subjugation of the students. They are to demonstrate their submission by their willingness to inform on other students, and by signing a letter that puts the blame for everything on Keating. Nolan gets all the information that he needs from Cameron: "Cameron's a fink", Charlie tells the other Dead Poets. "He's in Nolan's office right now, finking". Cameron, coming out of Nolan's office, does indeed urge the other students to "cooperate" by blaming their English teacher for leading them astray: "Keating put us up to all this crap, didn't he? If it wasn't for him, Neil would be cozied up in his room right now, studying his chemistry and dreaming of being called doctor." After some furious exchanges, Charlie, full of rage and contempt, strikes Cameron in the face, thereby insuring his own immediate expulsion from the school.

What follows is a McCarthy-type interrogation and humiliation of the members of the Dead Poets Society. In the presence of their parents the students are asked one by one about others who may have been involved in the group, and then told to sign the letter of blame. All the Dead Poets succumb. We see Knox and Meeks hiding in their rooms after "cooperating" and signing the letter (deeply ashamed of their betrayal). Todd Anderson tries to resist. He haltingly questions that Keating is responsible for Neil's death. But he is browbeaten into submission by his impatient and uncaring father and the intimidating stare of Nolan. He reluctantly signs when he sees the signatures of the other students under the incriminating letter.

The film does not end with the defeat of the students, however. It is Todd who initiates an open demonstration of defiance in the class room, once classes have resumed. Nolan has taken over Keating's English class. It so happens that during the first session Keating has to pass through the room to remove his belongings. Todd, greeting him with Whitman style as "O Captain! My Captain!" climbs on top of his desk to thus honor the fired teacher. One by one other student follows his daring example. Nolan shouts at them to sit down, and he furiously orders Keating to leave the room. But the students (except Cameron), who at first were too ashamed to even look at each other because of their earlier betrayal, nearly all stand on their desks proudly, thanking the man who had awakened their minds.

### 2.1.2 Existentialism

In the simple understanding, existentialism is the study of the existence. Existentialism is the way to learn about what the meaning of existence. Existentialism is not talking about everything that exists, but mostly concerning on what existence itself. It is not discussing about the meaning of what people are, but the emphasis is on why people exist and what the people existence is.

Existentialism also concerns on the something is meaningful as opposed to something is meaningless. For example, when people are thinking and they are capable of doing something or at least decides something, then they really realize it, it means that they have fulfilled their existence. On the other hand, if people

cannot think, decide and doing something, so they are meaningless because they cannot give the meaning for their existence.

Sartre says that existentialism is humanism. His famous axiom “existence preceded essence” means that everything in this world begins with existence that causes their essence. Human’s essence is determined by their existence.

Considering to this statement, Sartre says that actually humans are left alone and free to create and re-create their own existence, again and again, through their choices and their actions (Sartre, 2003, p.25).

Panza and Gale (2008, p.13) in his book *Existentialism for Dummies* state:

Existentialism is the study of existence. Existentialism is not the study of everything that exists, but it is the study of existence itself, it is the study of what it means for something to exist at all as opposed to not existing. It is also the study of what it means for something, as opposed to nothing, to exist at all. Of course, the primary focus of existentialism is a particular kind of existence, the kind of existence that includes existing things like people, because people are aware of their existence and capable of questioning it.

Further, Panza and Gale also mention ten themes appeared in the existentialism:

1. **Absurdity:** For the existentialists, life is absurd; it makes no sense and has no meaning or ultimate purpose, but human being need it to make sense, to have meaning and purpose.
2. **Rejection of meaning-giving narratives:** It isn’t enough to say that life is absurd; the existentialist repeatedly make the point that when philosophy, religion, or science tries to make sense of it, the attempts always fail.
3. **Alienation:** This is the feeling that you’re a stranger in your own life, a stranger in the world.



4. **Anxiety:** This is the feeling of unease you get when you start to recognize that life is absurd.

5. **Forlornness:** This is the feeling of loneliness you get when you realize that no one can help you make sense of your existence.

6. **Responsibility:** Everyone bears responsibility. If no one is going to give you a guidebook to life, you have to bear responsibility for making your way through it and creating some kind of meaning for it.

7. **Authenticity:** People want authenticity — to live in a way that's in tune with the truth of who they are as human being and the world they live in.

8. **Individuality:** An important part of developing an authentic and satisfying life is individuality. Reason, science, and systems that try to cover up the absurdity of life often take individuality from you.

9. **Passion/engagement:** Being passionate or engaged is another important aspect of living an authentic life, and it's under attack from the same forces that take away your individuality.

10. **Death:** This is the ultimate context for all human actions and an important source of the absurdity of life.

However, the writer will not analyze all the ten themes above in this study.

The writer's focus is on Sartre's existentialism about "existence preceded essence" and also his statement "humans are left alone and free to create and re-create their own existence, again and again, through their choices and their actions" shown by Keating's teaching methods against "The Four Pillars" and also through the students' decisions and actions.

### 2.1.3 Existence

In the very simple understanding, existence is presence. It means that something has their admissions or in other word, we admit that something really exists. There are three definitions of existence as what retrieved in [selfknowledge.com](http://selfknowledge.com). (p.1):

1. The state of existing or being: actual possession of being; continuance in being; as, the existence of body and of soul in union.
2. Continued or repeated manifestation; occurrence, as of events of any kind.
3. That which exists; a creature; an entity; as, living existence.

Kierkegaard in Dagun (1990) says that “one’s existence means he is able to decide something to set out his life. Therefore, one who does not dare to make a decision is not living in existence in the real meaning.”

Based on what Kierkegaard stated above, we know that as the human being who have our own existence we should make a decision to do something (actions) and start to give a meaning for our life. That will make us human beings who live in the real existence. The theory is suitable with this study since this study discusses about the existence of the characters in the movie who finally decided to do something (actions) through their own decisions to give the meaning in their life.

### 2.1.4 *Carpe Diem*

*Carpe diem* is a phrase from a Latin poem by Horace. It is popularly translated as ‘seize the day’. *Carpe* means "pick, pluck, pluck off, gather", but

Horace uses the word to mean "enjoy, make use of". In Horace, the phrase is part of the longer *Carpe diem quam minime credula postero* which means "seize the day, trusting as little as possible in the future". The origin source for the Latin phrase is Horace in Odes Book I: *Dum loquimur, fugerit invida, aetas: carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero* which translated as: while we're talking, envious time is fleeing: seize the day, put no trust in the future (Wikipedia, 2010, para.1). It means that we have to use the chance that we have today well and wisely and not to give our hope too high for our future. We just have to do what we can do today. In short, *carpe diem* is a 'magical' word to motivate someone in achieving their wants.

This spirit of *carpe diem* will be the dominant reason of the character's decisions and actions in this movie. The spirit of *carpe diem* (seize the day) has a relation with the existentialism theory since the focus of this theory is about human's existence. It means that to give or to fulfill the meaning of our life (our existence), we have to do something (real actions). In other words, to give our essence in life, what we need is just doing something as soon as possible. We just have to do what we can do today and use our time wisely before we feel regret in the future time because of doing nothing. *Carpe diem* teaches to seize the day, to use the chance that we have to give the meaning in our life through our choices and actions.

### 2.1.5 Rebellion

Petersen (2001, p.10) in his book *Resistance and Rebellion* says that Rebellion is Mechanisms. Mechanisms are specific causal patterns that explain individual actions over a wide range of settings; they are intermediary between laws and description. It means that rebellion happen because someone has a different point of view or disagrees with the fixed/established rules. Someone rebels something to criticize or at least to build a new perception about something new.

Rebellion appears when there is a disagreement about something and makes some contradictions. The pro tries to keep what it is alike and the contra tries to give a new perception or re-check whether it is suitable or not. Even, sometimes it is absolutely different and cannot be accepted anymore. In this movie, the rebellions are caused by the different point of view about the established principles at Welton academy and Keating tries to give his different point of view about that.

### 2.1.6 Tradition

David Emery (2010, para.1) says that tradition is a belief, custom, story, or practice (etc.) handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth or demonstration. Tradition is inherited from the very first generation into the next generation continuously. Tradition is inherited without any important changes and it is still stable from time to time.

Leavis (1948) in his book *The Great Tradition* mentions tradition as any body of works, styles, conventions, or beliefs which are represented as having been 'handed down' from the past to the present. In practice, this means a specific selection of works arranged according to a certain interpretation of the past, usually made in order to lend authority to present critical arguments.

In this movie, the tradition at Welton academy is something established that exists from time to time. The strict tradition here is about preparing the students to enter a high qualified university (Ivy League) with a good score in the end of the study through the established curriculums, and urges the students to obey the rules without thinking for themselves.

### 2.1.7 Honor

Johnson (1755) in his work *A Dictionary of the English Language* defined honor as having several senses, the first of which was nobility of soul, magnanimity, and a scorn of meanness. This sort of honor derives from the perceived virtuous conduct and personal integrity of the person endowed with it.

On the other hand, Johnson also defined honor in relationship to reputation and fame; to privileges of rank or birth, and as respect of the kind which places an individual socially and determines his right to precedence. This sort of honor is not so much a function of moral or ethical excellence, as it is a consequence of power.

The conclusion is that there are two kinds of honor. The first is honor that people have since they were born or we can call it as direct honor. People with

this honor often called as the aristocrats or bourgeois. The second type of honor is an honor that people get by the real efforts, like hard working to get more money, a better life, position, and so on.

The honor discussed in this study is the honor in the movie which is conducted by the characters through their own efforts (decisions and actions) based on the spirit of *carpe diem*.

### 2.1.8 Discipline

In simple understanding, discipline is the control or repression of personal impulses, instincts, and desires in order to insure behavior and compliance with established social expectations or the demands of authorities. Discipline talks about self-controlled and mostly discusses about obedience.

[Dictionary.reference.com](http://Dictionary.reference.com) stated some meaning of discipline, such as:

1. Training to act in accordance with rules; drill: military discipline.
2. Activity, exercise, or a regimen that develops or improves a skill; training: a daily stint at the typewriter is excellent discipline for a writer.
3. Punishment inflicted by way of correction and training.
4. The rigor or training effect of experience, adversity, etc.: the harsh discipline of poverty.
5. Behavior in accordance with rules of conduct; behavior and order maintained by training and control: good discipline in an army.
6. A set or system of rules and regulations.

7. The system of government regulating the practice of a church as distinguished from its doctrine.

8. An instrument of punishment, esp. a whip or scourge, used in the practice of self-mortification or as an instrument of chastisement in certain religious communities.

9. A branch of instruction or learning: the disciplines of history and economics.

So, it can be concluded that in its most general sense, discipline refers to systematic instruction given to disciple. To discipline thus means to instruct a person to follow a particular code of conduct order, while in this movie, being discipline is obeying the rules at Welton academy.

**2.1.9 Excellence**

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) argued that excellence is the possession of unusually good qualities. Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way. Excellence is to be outstanding. Excellence is not only concentrates in doing things, but the emphasis is in doing things well. It is about to be perfect and extraordinary. Someone gives the best of them with maximum efforts to get their excellence. Therefore, it can be concluded that to do an excellence thing needs a big and maximum efforts. Like honor, the characters in the movie also get their own excellence through their own decisions and actions based on the spirit of *carpe diem*.

### 2.1.10 Film Studies

Since the writer uses film as the object of the study, so the writer thinks that there should be a theory which has a correlation with film/movie itself. In film studies, there are three different ways in interpreting film as stated by Abowitz (2000): “Interpreting a film involves similar types of questions and analytical tools as does reading any other type of text. We look at basic analytical, interpretive, and normative elements in the film”. Further he says:

In film studies, we have to select what part of the film will be used so we can decide whether we use analytical, interpretive, or normative elements. First, in analytical analysis, we discuss the basic plot and sub-plots, theme, characters and characters development, symbols, recurrent or important imagery, and basic narratives that we see in film. Second, for the interpretive analysis, we should put the film into a historical, social, and cultural context. Third, in normative analysis, we have to think about what moral and political meanings we read in film.

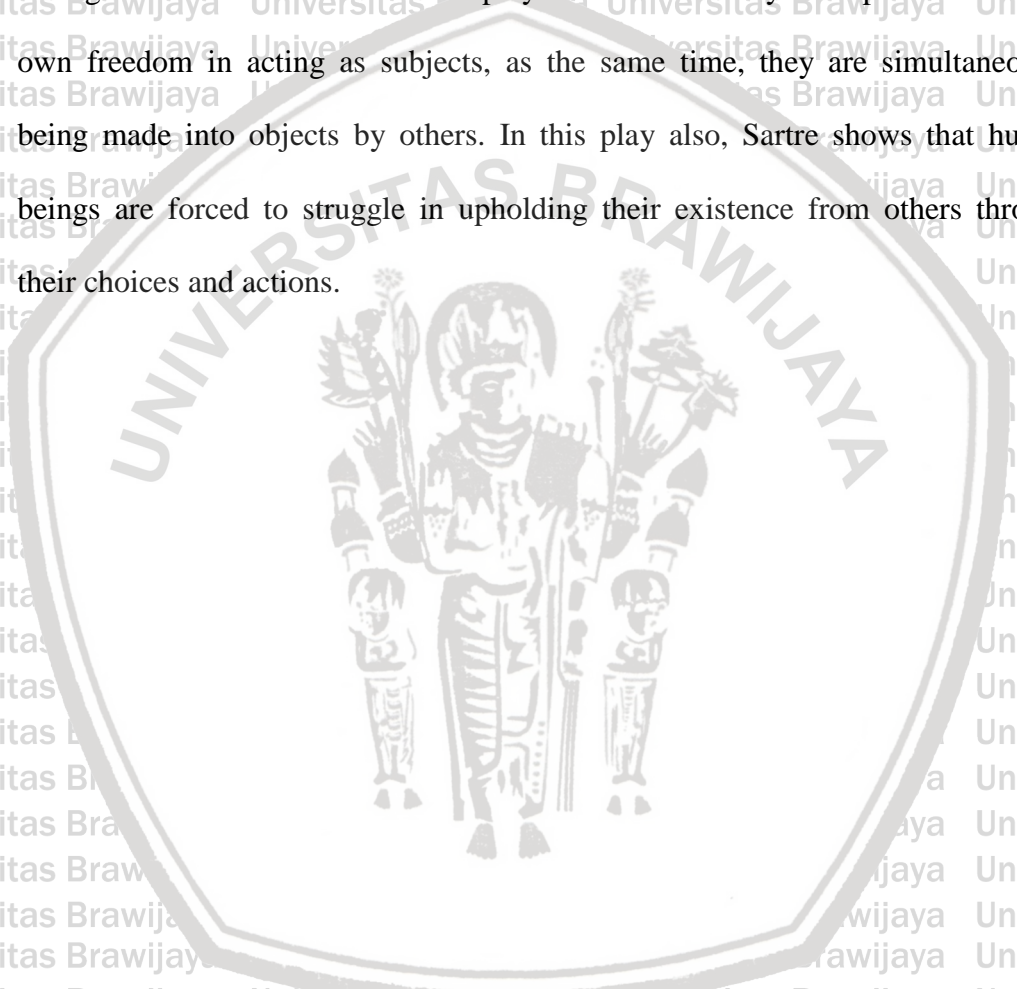
From the statement above, the writer decided to use the analytical analysis to discuss the *Dead Poets Society* the movie. The boundaries of the discussion are about the themes, characters, and characters development. The writer will interpret how the themes about rebellions and also the spirit of *carpe diem* (seize the day) influence the characters development in this movie.

### 2.2 Previous Study

There is a previous study about existentialism which has a correlation with this study entitled “*Existentialism In Sartre’s Play ‘No Exit’*” by Dian Andriani Winataningtyas (2005) from University of Brawijaya. This study is aimed to



revolve around the clashing existence among the characters in the play (Garcin, Inez, and Estelle) in order to elaborate Sartre's existentialism philosophy about 'Being for others', a major component of "Being and nothingness." The result of this study is that Sartre is able in illuminating his existentialism philosophy through the three characters in this play to show how they attempt to assert their own freedom in acting as subjects, as the same time, they are simultaneously being made into objects by others. In this play also, Sartre shows that human beings are forced to struggle in upholding their existence from others through their choices and actions.



## CHAPTER III

### FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides the analysis of this study including the writer's interpretation and also the interpretation of theoretical framework based on the problems of the study and the objectives of the study.

#### 3.1 The Rebellions Toward "The Four Pillars"

Welton Academy is one of the best preparatory schools which are used to produce great graduates and deliver them into good colleges/universities (Ivy Leagues). For many years, in Nolan (the headmaster of the academy) opinion, the secret of this success was because of the loyalty of the application of the principles there. The principles known as "The Four Pillars" are tradition, honor, discipline, and excellence. For Nolan and all the teachers at Welton, those four principles are the best way/system in teaching and elaborating the students' skills.

They do not consider what actually the students really want. For them, the best things for the students are just a good mark and finally success in entering the Ivy Leagues. At Welton also, the students are forced to follow the established rules and the curriculum without any consideration.

However, everything starts to change when the new English teacher, John Keating (one of former Welton's students) comes and brings his unique and different point of view. Keating through his teaching methods tries to give a new

interesting perception or a great way of thinking in looking at something. What he teaches is about how we as the human being confronting our life. He wants his students to step out of the hole and start to think for themselves freely. What Keating does will absolutely different from the principles of “The Four Pillars”. His actions will make him and his students conduct their own rebellions toward “The Four Pillars” at Welton academy.

In this movie, John Keating shows his first rebellion by using a different method in teaching the students outside the class. Keating makes the students follow his action/order into the main entranceway. What Keating teaches is something different to other teachers’ method at Welton Academy. This Keating’s action actually shows how he rebels the rules (tradition and discipline) of Welton academy which dominantly/constantly doing the lessons inside the classroom. By doing this, Keating wants to show that being different is something good and interesting. Here, Keating wants to show that tradition and discipline are not always thing that must be obeyed ‘strictly’, but more in how the process is also another important thing. Keating does not mean to make the students radically not to obey the rule or being indiscipline, but how they as the human being maintain their own ways to get or fulfill their wants, how they think and act based on their own desires. Keating emphasizes that human have their own existence, so it is their job to give their essence through their decisions and actions.

Keating also wants his students not to trap in the rule or tradition of calling their teachers as Mr. or sir, but more in how they feel daring to step out of the old custom by calling him as “Oh Captain, My Captain!” along the class. It shows that

being different and looking at other points of view is very important aspect although it is strange or unusual. Keating emphasizes that being different is not a wrong decision. The most important is how we become different and make that difference something unique and extraordinary. For him, the one who give the value for our life is ourselves. It is us who have a freedom and choices to determine our essence through our decisions and actions as what Sartre said that 'existence preceded essence'. We have to do something and give the meaning for our own life by ourselves.

Another rebellion happens when Keating asks one of the students, Pitts to read the first stanza of the poem entitled "To the Virgins". The stanza is stated below:

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,  
 Old time is still a flying,  
 And this same flower that smiles today,  
 Tomorrow will be dying.

Keating explains the Latin term for 'gather ye rosebuds while ye may' is *carpe diem*. He asks the students what the meaning of those words. One of the students, Meeks answers it with seize the day. This correct answer makes Keating asks another question about why the writer written that statement down. He tells the students "Because we are food for worms, lads. Because, believe it or not, each and every one of us in this room is one day going to stop breathing, turn cold, and die" What Keating means here is to give the students a motivation and confidence to take advantage of their time wisely. Keating convinces the students to use the rest of their life to do something useful in order they do not feel regret in the future time. Beside that, by explaining this, Keating actually wants the students to

get their own honor and also their own excellence by applying the spirit of *carpe diem* (seize the day), not only try to get a good score in their lessons or success in entering a good university (Ivy Leagues).

Keating emphasizes that being honored or excellent is more in how we do something with the best efforts we have. By giving the students an understanding to do something, to seize the day, it means that he wants their students have their own meaning through their actions, as what Sartre said that existence preceded essence. In this case, Keating also does his rebellion against the tradition and discipline that exist at Welton. For him, being honored or excellent is not about obeying the tradition or discipline, but more in how the students do their own actions based on what they really want. Keating wants to show that they are the only ones who know the best for themselves.

Keating also strengthens his intention in motivating his students to always seize the day by whispering word *Carpe* in a gruff voice, "*Carpe. Carpe Diem*". "Seize the day boys, make your life extraordinary". Here, Keating wants to deliver his meaning to the students to seize the day, to take the chance while they still young and have much more time. He reminds them that it is very important to do something while they still have the chance, while they still alive. This means that we have to give the meaning to our life by doing something we can do before we die and feel regret because we do not do anything in our life. It is reflecting Sartre's statement that humans are left alone and free to create and re-create their own existence, again and again, through their choices and their actions. It is human themselves who can give a meaning in their own life. By doing this,

Keating wants the students to consider their own passions and let it out from the shadow of the Welton rules. It means that to get what they really want, they just need to focus on what they really want. It is fine, for awhile, to forget everything about Welton. They just need to think for themselves.

In another occasion, Keating also shows his students about his different point of view about "Understanding Poetry" written by J. Evan Pritchard, like what he said: "Excrement. That's what I think of Mr. J. Evans Pritchard. We're not laying pipe, we're talking about poetry. I mean, how can you describe poetry like American Bandstand? I like Byron, I give him a 42, but I can't dance to it". What Keating argues here shows that we should look anything at different points of view. It does not matter if most people or mainstream say 'A' but we say 'B'. The most important is we have a strong reason and thinking our own consideration of why we say 'B', because our way of thinking is determining our existence in our life. It can be said that we as a human being decides our own meaning through our choices and actions or even just through our thought.

In this case, existentialism also has its point of view about follow the mainstream. Actually, it is fine, it does not matter whether someone follows the mainstream or they can also being different to the mainstream. The focus that should be underlined is that those two things are choices, means that we can chose one of the two choices. One thing that becomes the problem is when someone just follows the mainstream in the way of not to be him/herself. In other words, if someone is forced to do or to act as what the mainstream says but actually he/she does not want to do it (we can say he/she pretends as if they really want to do it),

so we call it that he/she has a 'bad faith'. One example about bad faith is shown by Cameron. As we know that Cameron just follows the mainstream in order to save himself. Even, he is the first who takes Keating as the scapegoat of Neil's death so that the headmaster (Nolan) does not blame him, or in short he is saved.

On the other hand, for those who clearly choose to be different to the mainstream, of course they will do what they really want to do without any pretense. For Keating, he is already decided to choose his own choice. He chooses to have a different point of view, to be different, to have his own consideration against the mainstream, and he really shows it to his students.

Therefore, Keating instructs the students to rip out that page and also the entire introduction pages to show his disagreement and also his different point of view. He says:

"I want it gone, history. Leave nothing of it. Rip it out. Rip! Be gone J. Evans Pritchard, Ph.D. Rip, shred, tear. Rip it out. I want to hear nothing but ripping of Mr. Pritchard. It's not the bible, you're not going to go to hell for this. Go on, make a clean tear, I want nothing left of it."

What Keating does by asking the students to rip out the pages shows that he does not like with what stated on that book. For him, poetry is not mathematic or another exact matter. This action also shows that Keating rebels the tradition at Welton which consider book as the source of knowledge that must be appreciated.

He also rebels the discipline at Welton's rules not to rip the book, but the fact Keating precisely do that prohibited thing. In short, Keating tries to deliver his aim that book (tradition) as one factor that causes we as human cannot think free and have our own point of view. Human is provided with mind so that they can

think and decide something. When people are strictly focus on tradition, it means that they use their mind only in small portion or it can be said that they are being dictated, not think and decide something with their own desires or wants. Their essence is determined by their own existence, and it cannot be done if they do not decide their action by themselves.

Further, Keating says:

“Armies of academics going forward, measuring poetry. No, we will not have that here. No more of Mr. J. Evans Pritchard. Now in my class you will learn to think for yourselves again. You will learn to savor words and language. No matter what anybody tells you, words and ideas can change the world. I see that look in Mr. Pitt's eye, like nineteenth century literature has nothing to do with going to business school or medical school. Right? Maybe. Mr. Hopkins, you may agree with him, thinking "Yes, we should simply study our Mr. Pritchard and learn our rhyme and meter and go quietly about the business of achieving other ambitions.”

Keating wants to teach his students that what they say and think can change the world. It means that everyone has the same chance to change the world through their real actions. What makes the difference is who will be the one that take those roles. He adds that it is time for the students to think for themselves. Keating directs them to be a free thinker, means that they have their own rights to decide what they want to be, without any intervention from other people. This ambitious advice is having correlation with what Sartre said that humans are left alone and free to create and re-create their own existence, again and again, through their choices and their actions. In this case, Keating wants his students to think free and doing anything they really want.

To point out what he means, Keating asks the students to gather around him in the center of the class. He adds:



“We don't read and write poetry because it's cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. Medicine, law, business, engineering, these are all noble pursuits, and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for. To quote from Whitman: "O me, o life of the questions of these recurring, of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities filled with the foolish. What good amid these, o me, o life? Answer: that you are here. That life exists, and identity. That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse. That the powerful play goes on and you may contribute a verse. What will your verse be?"

This Keating statement contains a great question about what we (as the part of human race) can do and should do in spending our life, that life is always have a purpose, that life always has a reason to be struggled for. For his students, Keating wants to emphasize that life does really exist, that they should have a good reason and purpose to struggle the meaning of their life, and that they must give a contribution in the play of life. Keating convinces the students that they have to take a part in the life through their own actions and choices to give meaning in their life. He wants the students to be someone which have a meaning, or in other words, he wants his students become a useful and meaningful person, at least for themselves and also for human race. That is actually the basic premise about human existence which Keating tries to share with the students, the basic premise dealing with *carpe diem* and human existence.

Keating, through his teaching methods, start to give an impression to his students, mostly to several boys who next become the Dead Poets Society members. It is proved when Neil is coming and bringing Keating's senior annual.

The boys are discussing about him each other. This shows that Neil and the other boys are actually interested to Mr. Keating and tries to dig more about him.

Another interesting thing from Keating is that he consistently sustains his decision. It is represented with a special calling for him as “Oh Captain. My Captain!” when the boys want to call him. It shows that Keating feel more comfortable with that call and also dare the boys not to be strict at the rules of Welton and enjoy for themselves. The boys start to ask about the DPS and Keating asks them to keep a secret.

“The Dead Poets were dedicated to sucking the marrow out of life. That's a phrase from Thoreau that we'd invoke at the beginning of each meeting. You see we'd gather at the old Indian cave and take turns reading from Thoreau, Whitman, Shelley; the biggies. Even, some of our own verse. And in the enchantment of the moment we'd let poetry work its magic. It wasn't just "guys", we weren't a Greek organization, we were romantics. We didn't just read poetry, we let it drip from our tongues like honey. Spirits soared, women swooned, and gods were created, gentlemen, not a bad way to spend an evening eh?”

It seems the boys are interested in Keating's teaching methods and all Keating's explanation, mostly Neil. Knox is also interested in that activity because Charlie convinces him that DPS is the way to get Chris (Keating's statement women swoon). Although these boys seemly understand the point at the surface only, but it cannot be denied that Keating caused them having their own desires and thinking free about what they really want, not only concern in “The Four Pillars”. It can be said that Keating does his rebellion against “The Four Pillars” through his teaching methods. Through the rebellions also, the boys finally realize their existence and that they can decide something for themselves.

It is proved when they finally decided to go to the cave and doing the same activities as what Keating did in the past. The boys never do those activities before. It shows that Keating's teaching methods makes them interested and urges

them doing those activities to show their existence. They really give the meaning for themselves, although it does not completely what Keating have in mind.

Another lesson about human existence by Keating is when he leaps up onto his desk to emphasize that it is important to constantly look at things in different ways. He analogizes his meaning by glancing around the classroom from the top of the desk. It is different when he looks around if he sits down than if he looks it from the top of the desk. He adds, just when they think they know something, they have to look at it in another way. This means that to exist, we as human being should have our own consideration and our way of thinking to show our existence in determining our essence. Keating tells the students to try it one by one while he gives them homework to compose a poem of their own, an original work. Once again, Keating shows how his thought is and also how the great intention he has for his students to find their own desires through their own ways. This action exactly rebels the tradition and discipline at Welton that obligate the teachers in preparing the students to enter the college with good marks through the established curriculums.

Keating also shows another different teaching method when he teaches his students a soccer game. In this case, Keating rebels the tradition and tries to build a new way to deliver the message of the lessons by asking the students to take a slip of paper and read the words on their own paper loudly before they kick the ball in turns. Keating also plays music while the students still kick the ball in turn.

He purposes his means to feel the music and let it fill their souls. It emphasizes that no matter the way, no matter the method, but more in the process to fulfill the

purpose. Our actions determine our existence and essence in our life. In short, if we fulfilled our existence, then we can get our essence in our life.

It is the process of fulfilling the meaning in life for the students which is represented by reading their original poems. In this opportunity, he underlines that the importance of the poem is not how long the poem is, but more on how we make the poem becomes extraordinary. It shows that Keating wants his students to think freely and just write down what they have in their mind, enjoy it, explore it, and feel it as if they are really a free thinker man. It is not about what they write, but how the process they write it. At least, when they write their poems, they start to think, to feel what they want to write, and show how their way of thinking. In other words, when they think and start to write it, there is a process of decision, a process of giving a meaning for their existence in their life.

Another Keating's great role is shown by his motivation in convincing Todd that he actually has a talent. As we know that Todd is an extremely shy boy who thinks that he is worthless. Keating asks him to shout his 'barbarian' yawp with a loud voice. He also makes him explores his imagination about Walt Whitman picture. He makes him imagine what Whitman is like. Keating does a fantastic method in motivating and arousing Todd's talent. By doing this, Keating is really fulfilled his role not only as the teacher, but also as a person who understand the spirit of *carpe diem*. It means that what Keating does makes Todd realizes his talent and makes him giving a meaning about his own existence. For Todd, it shows that what he thinks before, if he is a useless person, at that moment changed into someone who actually have a potential ability do to something and

also someone who has existence to determine his essence. This awakening process shows that Todd as human being finally decided his own existence and also give an essence to his life.

Another rebellion shown by Keating is when he asks the students to gather in school courtyard, while Cameron, Pitts, and Knox are walking in a circle. What he does here is to illustrate the point of conformity; the difficulty in maintaining their own beliefs in the face of others. Keating underlines that they must trust that their beliefs are unique, even though others may think them odd or unpopular like what he says:

"I brought them up here to illustrate the point of conformity: the difficulty in maintaining your own beliefs in the face of others. Now, those of you -- I see the look in your eyes like, "I would've walked differently." Well, ask yourselves why you were clapping. Now, we all have a great need for acceptance. But you must trust that your beliefs are unique, your own, even though others may think them odd or unpopular, even though the herd may go, "That's baaaaad." Robert Frost said, "Two roads diverged in a wood and I, I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." Now, I want you to find your own walk right now. Your own way of striding, pacing. Any direction. Anything you want. Whether it's proud, whether it's silly, anything. Gentlemen, the courtyard is yours."

To point out what he means, Keating quotes Robert Frost statement, "two roads diverged in a wood and I, I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference". By doing this, Keating wants the students to find their own ways. It is important; it is unique to be a different, it is just do what they really want to do. This action is clearly against the tradition or mainstream about the dangers of conformity. Even though, later on Mr. Nolan warned him not to do the same thing again and just prepare the students for college. What Nolan means is

about the tradition and discipline at welton. But, Keating always thinks that the idea of educating was to learn to think for themselves and how the students find their own ways.

Another rebellion is fulfilled by Charlie who actually misses his perception in Keating's lessons about *carpe diem* and sucking all the narrow out of life. His radical action in composing an illegal letter asking for girls at Welton is absolutely wrong and different to what Keating have explained. But, what he did at least shows that he is already thought for himself and decided an action, although he did a misperception in understanding the spirit of *carpe diem*. Keating, again, take his role as human being by advising Charlie that sucking narrow out of life does not mean chocking the bone. He adds, there is a time for daring and there is a time for caution. This means that we cannot understand *carpe diem* only in the surface level, but in the deeper one. Keating says that to understand it, we must be a wise person. In other words, to seize the day we also have to look at another aspect around us and have to think wise.

Neil also dealing with his own rebellion against his father or we can also consider it as tradition and also discipline, when his father knows that he is involved in a play. Neil tries to tell his father that acting in a play is what he really wants in his entire life. He tries to convince his father that he loves acting very much. But, the strong tradition and discipline shown by his father's act that control Neil's life is too difficult for Neil. His father is already prepared everything for Neil's future to be a doctor. This is what actually Neil refuses. Long time before he meets Keating, he admits that he always does what his father

wants for him. But, after he knows and realizes the meaning of *carpe diem* explained by Keating, he starts to think and decides his own way. He chooses to fulfill his own desire in playing drama rather than become a doctor as his father's want. He decides to seize the day, to take the chance as long as he gets the chance.

Even, he lies to Keating who asks him to talk to his father about his desire in playing drama. He decides to continue his decision and take the risks. It seems that the spirit of *carpe diem* encourages him not to stop his deep intention in playing drama. Moreover, he still does the best effort in playing drama as 'Puck'.

This indicates that he got his honor and excellence through what he did. Honor and excellence that he got by rebelling the tradition and discipline of his father. Honor and excellence that he got from his own decisions and actions without any intervention of his father.

Neil's decisions and actions above proved that he was already realized himself as a part of human race who have his own existence. He knows his purpose in his life, he also understands what roles he has, and for what he exists.

In short, he fulfilled his criteria as an individual in the part of human race. He is already thought, decided his choices, and did his own actions by himself. By doing those kinds of things, he could prove his existence to determine his essence.

Through his decisions and actions also, he chooses to suicide by shooting his head with his father's gun. Although his life ends with that kind of tragedy, he is succeed to be a free man who has fulfilled his own desire in playing drama and followed his decisions. He also got his honor and excellence through his decisions

and actions, the true honor that he got from his best friends for his roles in their friendships. The true honor that another people cannot erase or interfere.

Neil's action in committed a suicide actually shows the two possible reasons for what he does. The first reason of why Neil chooses to suicide is that his decision/action is just an impact/an effect of what his father's wants. Neil may feel depressed because of his father's wants. He thinks that everything in his life is already determined by his father. For example, his father wants him to be a doctor while he loves acting very much. This unsolved conflict between him and his father makes him confused, restricted, and depressed that finally force him to commit a suicide. Second reason is that what he does is actually his own decision. It means that he always has some choices for his life. Although he cannot conduct what he really wants in playing drama or although his father is already prepared everything for him, he can continue his life. But in fact, he decides to choose another choice to commit a suicide. There will always so many choices with all the consequences for each choice, and Neil realizes the consequence of his choice/action.

Knox, the boy who falls in love with Chris is also doing his own rebellion. He rebels Welton rule about discipline. To meet the girl he loves, he goes out of Welton secretly. Since Welton focuses on how make good graduates, so it means that it is illegal for a woman who may become the obstacle entering Welton.

Therefore, Welton academy is a special place for man. Knowing this thing, Knox does not want to lose with this rule. However, he proves that he can do what he really wants to do. This rule is not an obstacle that make him gives up, but this



rule, in fact, makes him realize his role as a human being. He realizes that he must do something to prove his existence to determine his essence in his life. He still gives his best to get the girl he loves with all of the consequences and finally he got what he really struggled for, that is Chris, the girl he loves very much.

Meeks and Pitts, the boys who love science very much are also dealing with their rebellion. It is proved when one of the teachers, Dr. Hagger warns them about their invention. The teacher reminds them not to make a radio, but these two boys say that it is a radar, a science project. Although they got those kind of warn, but they does not care. Even, they succeed make their own radio and found their freedom when they got the signal from Radio Free America. Their action proved that they can maintain their own want, that they can conduct their own existence and essence.

The challenge for the boys in maintaining the lessons about human existence and spirit of *carpe diem* is coming from the headmaster when Neil's death causes an investigation at Welton. It is Keating who becomes the scapegoat for Neil's death. The boys of DPS, except Cameron are trying to convince themselves that what they believe is true. They, especially Todd believe that what Keating have taught is not the cause of Neil's death. They know that Neil loves acting based on his own desires. What Keating have taught is only about how important we as human being have a different point of view and more in thinking for ourselves as the real free men. This conflict proves that being different and against mainstream are always difficult things to be faced. It needs a seriousness to believe and keeps our consideration in our life.

Like what Sartre said that existence preceded essence, Keating and those boys are already fulfilled their meaning in their life. They decided their own choices and actions through their own desires. They constantly create and re-create their existence and determine their essence as the part of human race and proved their own existence.

The final scene about thank and appreciations happens when Nolan replaces Keating in teaching English. The class is already in progress when Keating is entering the class to take his luggage. Nolan urges him to take it as quick as possible. When Keating walks out, Todd turns to him and says that they (the DPS boys) are forced to sign the expulsion letter for him. Nolan urges him to sit down and asks Keating to leave. Todd keeps asking Keating to believe him. When Keating is already near the door, Todd stands up on the desk and call him “Oh captain. My captain!”, while Nolan still warns him to sit down. This brave action is followed by Knox, Pitts, Meeks, and several students except Cameron. This action shows that what Keating have taught so far got some places and interests from the students, that they know what they should do in their life. The lessons about *carpe diem*, being different, and follow their own desires. The lessons that make them become more free men and free thinkers. The great lessons that explain that excellence is not always rewarded in our world, that discipline is at times nothing more than the rigid application of misguided and illogical distortions, that honor can be horribly twisted to suit dishonorable ends, and that tradition may indeed become its own travesty. More than that, this action shows that Todd, who is extremely shy boy, proved that he also rebels “The Four

Pillars”. He does not care with the tradition, discipline, or honor at Welton. What he believes is that he is a free man, a brave man who does not influenced by those “Four Pillars”.

### 3.2 The Influences of the Spirit of *Carpe Diem*

Another interesting aspect in this movie beside the rebellions is also about the spirit of *carpe diem* (seize the day). As we know that the spirit of *carpe diem* gives a great contribution to the characters’ changes/developments in this movie.

The changes here are more in the way of their thinking. This spirit also makes them break the shackles in their life. *Carpe diem* leads them to step out of the falseness of their life.

The spirit of *carpe diem* is the dominant reason of Keating’s teaching methods that are very different and unique from other teacher at Welton. He is not only teaching English, but also teaching a way, a philosophy in spending life. He wants his students to use their chance well and wisely when they still have the chance. Keating emphasizes the importance of looking at something in different point of view constantly. He also wants the students to do what they really want to do. He underlines that it is important to be different and unique, to be extraordinary. It is not about the result. It is about the process they conduct in fulfilling their meaning/essence of their life, the process that should be done through their own decisions and their real actions. In short, Keating wants his students to realize and determine their own existence by themselves.

The spirit of *carpe diem* also influences Todd's way of thinking. It starts to take its role when Todd writes down that word in capital letters on his book. Even though he finally rips it out, at least, what he did shows that slowly he starts to think the concept, the value of that philosophical statement. Todd, as the member of human being, actually realizes that he must decide and then do something in his life in order to fulfill his role as individual and also giving the meaning in his life.

Even, he is the first one who leads the other students to do the open demonstration in the last scene when Keating is 'dumped out' of Welton.

Another influence of *Carpe Diem* spirit in this movie is shown when Neil finally found what he really wants, a cast for a play, an acting in local play entitled "A Midsummer Night's Dream". Even, for this play, he does not care whether his father will give an agreement or not, as what he says "and for the first time I'm gonna do it whether my father wants me to or not! *Carpe diem!*" In this occasion, Neil is really deciding what he really wants which is coming up from his deep desires. No matter what his father will do, but more in how he becomes a free thinker. He thinks that it is the time to do what he wants about acting, just take it or leave it forever and never get the same chance again. Later, he finally got the actor as 'Puck' (the main character of the play). Even, he types a permission letter by himself as if his father types it for him. For him, what his father did so far for him is not what he really wants. He does not want to be a doctor as what his father wants. Neil chooses to do what he wants in his deep passion that is playing drama. Even, when his father finally known him and get angry, he decides to commit in suicide with his father handgun. This action

proved that there are no body else who can interfere someone's existence except he himself. For Neil, he is already fulfilled his existence through his choices and actions although finally he dies. For him, he is already a free man and gets his own essence in his life.

The effect of *carpe diem* also happens to Knox. He takes the chance to meet the girl he loves. Although he did not meet her and say nothing, at least he chooses to seize the day instead of holding his feeling. He chooses to use the chance he has rather than being worried. For him, to get what he wants, he should do something, a real action. By thinking it and finally doing something, he is already aware and fulfilled his own existence in his life. Those two boys (Neil and Knox) proved that they really exist through their own choices and actions, acting in a play and trying to get the girl he loves.

The spirit of *carpe diem* is also shown by Knox who stills curious and cannot stop thinking about Chris. He finally decides to call her. "She's gonna hate me. The Danburrys will hate me. My parents will kill me. All right, goddamn it. You're right. *Carpe diem*. Even if it kills me." What Knox does is showing that he does want to lose the chance to meet Chris. Love is something worthy to be struggled for. Knox thinks that it is the only chance to call her or the chance will be disappeared at all. This *carpe diem* spirit makes him sure to struggle for the woman he loves and also dares his desire to possess her even she is already has a boyfriend (Chet Danburry). He has a strong feeling/confidence that she is going to be his girlfriend. He already decided his own decision to make himself exists.

The spirit of *carpe diem* also makes Knox slowly realizes his meaning in life. He knows that he should do something for fulfilling his existence. In this case, he decides that he should do something to get what he really wants, the girl he loves very much, Chris. To fulfill his desires, he decides to take the chance in meeting Chris and read a poem for her. What he did shows that he tries to complete his role as a part of human race that is playing in the drama of life. Everyone is demanded to give their contribution. Everyone is demanded to give a verse that can be the qualification of their essence. With all of the risks, Knox thinks that risks are the part of the consequence in spending his life. To seize the day, to take the chance as long as he has, and to get Chris are what Knox sure as the part of his roles in his life. He considers that his purpose is to get the girl he loves and also do any efforts to fulfill his intention.

Charlie whose name changed into Nuwanda is also applies the spirit of *carpe diem*. He acts as what he really wants. Even though he did a wrong thing, the point is that he is already thinking freely for himself. Meeks and Pitts are also succeeding in applying the spirit of *carpe diem* since they finally found their will in making a radio.

For all boys of DPS except Cameron, the spirit of *carpe diem* makes their life more meaningful. They can realize their roles and prove their existence through their choices and actions to give meaning in their own life. This spirit of *carpe diem* is something that makes them finally have a big motivation. *Carpe diem* becomes the strong reason and belief for their choices and actions. It is also can be said that the spirit of *carpe diem* becomes the dominant factor of their passion. It

can be concluded that the spirit of *carpe diem* is one of so many choices in the boys' life. For them, *carpe diem* is the most possible choice that suitable for their life. For the boys, to seize the day is what they finally really did.



## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents conclusion for all problems of the study which have been discussed in Chapter III and also suggestion for the next researchers in doing a similar study.

#### 4.1 Conclusion

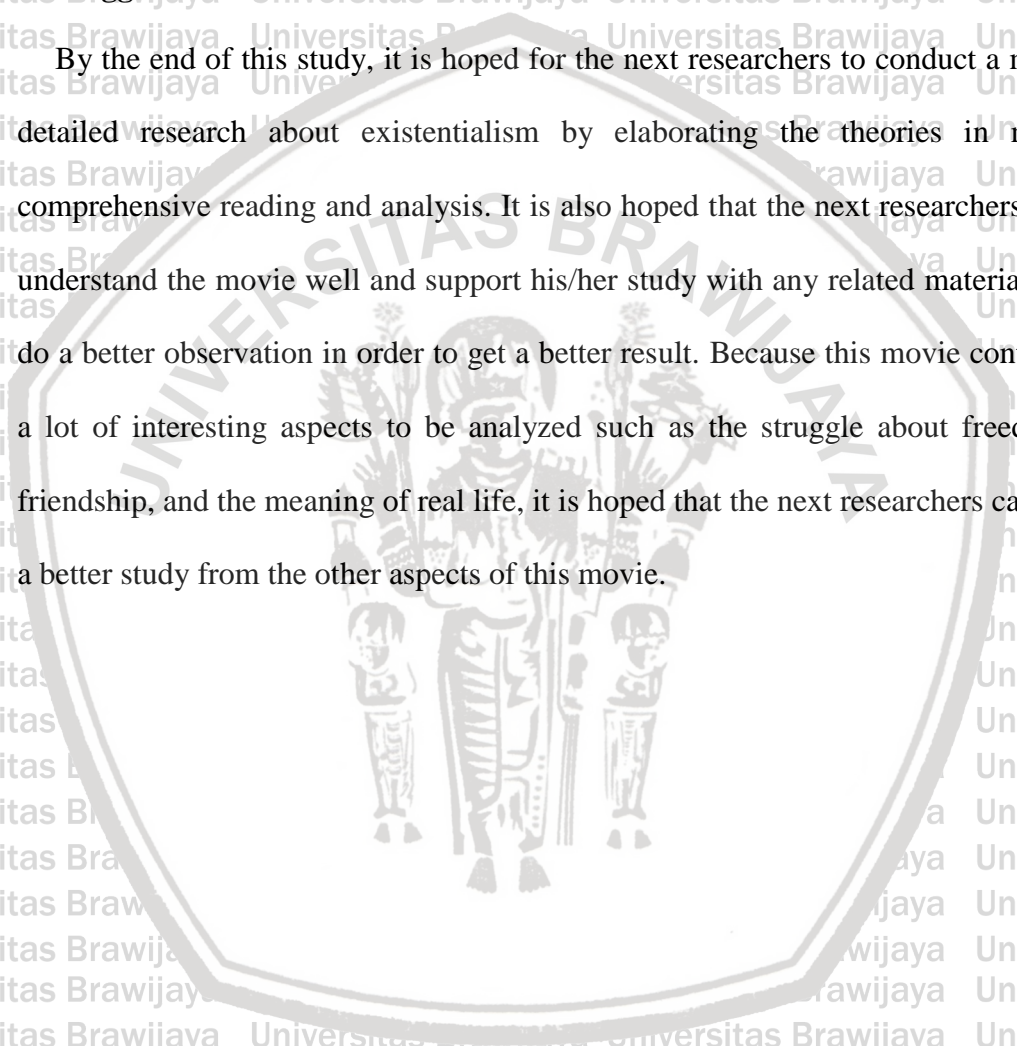
Based on what the writer's observation, the characters (Keating, Neil, Todd, Charlie, Knox, etc.) on this movie have fulfilled their existence through their rebellions and their actions which are based on the spirit of *carpe diem*, seize the day. Keating's teaching methods which are based on the spirit of *carpe diem* are absolutely different and unique, and of course against "The Four Pillars". It is seen that Keating realizes his role as an individual in his life, that in his life he should do something to determine his essence or his meaning. His rebellions show how he gets his own values by his own choices and actions. The same thing also happens to the boys who apply the spirit of *carpe diem*. Through their own rebellions, the boys know that they are free men who decide their own choices and actions to determine their meaning in their life. The spirit of *carpe diem* also changes their way of thinking. They become human beings who have their own existence and no one can interfere that. Finally, honor and excellence are things



that Keating and the boys receive from their own efforts, things that they really deserve to get it.

#### 4.2 Suggestion

By the end of this study, it is hoped for the next researchers to conduct a more detailed research about existentialism by elaborating the theories in more comprehensive reading and analysis. It is also hoped that the next researchers can understand the movie well and support his/her study with any related materials to do a better observation in order to get a better result. Because this movie contains a lot of interesting aspects to be analyzed such as the struggle about freedom, friendship, and the meaning of real life, it is hoped that the next researchers can do a better study from the other aspects of this movie.



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### APPENDICES

#### Appendix 1. Scenes of *Dead Poets Society*





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1.	17 Februari 2010	Pengajuan Bab I dan II	Pembimbing II	
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3.	2 Maret 2010	Revisi Bab I dan II	Pembimbing II	
4.	24 Maret 2010	Revisi Bab II	Pembimbing I	
5.	15 April 2010	Revisi Judul	Pembimbing I	
6.	28 April 2010	Revisi Bab II	Pembimbing II	
7.	11 Mei 2010	Revisi Ulang Bab I dan II	Pembimbing II	
8.	12 Mei 2010	Revisi Ulang Bab I dan II	Pembimbing I	
9.	19 Juli 2010	Pengajuan Bab III dan IV	Pembimbing I	
10.	21 Juli 2010	Pengajuan Bab III dan IV	Pembimbing II	
11.	12 Agustus 2010	Revisi Bab III dan IV	Pembimbing I	
12.	22 September 2010	Revisi Bab III dan IV	Pembimbing II	
13.	18 Oktober 2010	Revisi Bab I, II, III, dan IV	Pembimbing I	
14.	21 Oktober 2010	Revisi Bab I, II, III, dan IV	Pembimbing II	
15.	24 November 2010	Revisi Bab I, II, III, dan IV	Pembimbing I	
16.	29 November 2010	Revisi Bab I, II, III, dan IV	Pembimbing II	

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