

TITLE: DEAD POETS SOCIETY

DATE: 21.7.89

FILM VIDEO

DISTRIBUTOR: WARNER BROS

FIRST RESUB

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: USA

CATEGORY: 'PG'

CUTS NO CUTS

GENRE: YOUTH

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUB-TITLED DUBBED

FOR BOARD DISCUSSION

APPROPRIATE CATEGORY:	Uc	U	PG	15	18	R18	CUTS	REJECT
THEME			✓					
TREATMENT			✓					
<u>VISUALS:</u> NUDITY			✓		POSTCARD OF	LARGE-BUSTED WOMAN		
SEX								
VIOLENCE			✓					
HORROR			✓					
LANGUAGE								
DRUGS								
CRIMINAL TECHNIQUES								
<u>LEGALITY:</u> OBSCENITY								
CHILDREN								
ANIMALS								
BLASPHEMY								
FILM AS A WHOLE			✓					

SYNOPSIS AND COMMENTS:

Exciting English teacher, Mr Keating, (or the 'Captain' as the boys like to address him) wins the boys over with his innovative and eccentric teaching methods. His object is to "teach them to think", like most educators and not to cram set and institutionalised thoughts down their throats. The boys dig up some information about his student days at Wilton (the school they're in) and discover that he belonged in those days to The Dead Poets Society, a group who met in a nearby cave to assimilate the thoughts of famous poets (the 'Biggies' like Shelley, Whitman, etc.) and "suck the marrow out of life". Amid all this, young Neil Perry decides to take his fate in his hands, disobey his father and play Puck in the local production. Dad finds out, takes him home and outlines his future for him as a doctor. Unable to stand up to his father and thrash it all out, Neil shoots himself. The school inquiry scapegoats Keating by bludgeoning the boys into signing a document confirming his detrimental influence on Neil but as he leaves they demonstrate their solidarity by standing on their desks in defiance of Headmaster Nolan and "looking at life from a different perspective" as once advised by Keating and reciting Whitman's 'Captain, O Captain'.

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This brilliant and profoundly moving screenplay about the permission to break out of the mould of traditional thinking and exult in the meaning of life had four hardened examiners variously sobbing and weeping at different stages.

It takes on board the whole throbbing issue of emotional abuse of sons by fathers which has received an outlet in the campaigning and personal work of the American 'Men's Movement' which exists to bandage and heal the wounds inflicted on sons by fathers incapable of expressing their love and approval to their sons but demonstrating their bond by creating even higher expectations and goals and making sure they provide every material necessity by working hard and making sacrifices themselves.

Neil's resultant suicide in Reel 6 (17:23) was the only category issue at 'PG' (apart from a brief glimpse of a magazine picture of a large-breasted woman in Reel 3 (03:07)) but after much debate and consultation with FHP and BG who sat in, the team was unanimously in favour of 'PG' since the suicide was not seen and all that indicated its occurrence visually was a pistol on the floor and Neil's limp hand under his father's desk. Pass 'PG'.