Johnny Utah

Period 4

18 February 2006

English 11

Journals 1 – 4

Journal # 1 – 1/2/06 - “Life is lived in the living. Set aside convention, caution, and arbitrary "rules" about how life is supposed to be lived. Choose! Explore! Adventure! Live life to the fullest.” - Jonathan Lockwood Huie. Explain what the quote means and compare it to the theme of the song *Carpe Diem* by The Nerve Agents. You must identify the theme of the song in order to compare it to what the quote means. Use specific quotes from the song as evidence to support your point.

The quote is claiming that in order to live life to the fullest that you must take risks and go against society’s norms. This means that instead of following society’s “arbitrary rules,” you should risk being different and expand your view of what life is about. For example, most people in the United States think someone is successful if they graduate from high school in order to go to college so that they can eventually get a well-paying job.

This common convention that a majority of society upholds takes no risk. You are expected to try to go to college. You are expected to try to get the job that pays the highest. It is easy to follow the guidelines that society sets for us. However, the quote says that through exploring other alternatives, possible adventurous ones, that one might actually get more out of their life. For example, if you were interested in art and wanted to see the world, you might consider back packing through Europe and going to art museums instead of simply looking for a job after you graduate.

In the song *Carpe Diem*, by The Nerve Agents, the speaker talks about not giving up his dream just so that he can get a job that is going to hold him down. The speaker claims that chasing his dream and avoiding mediocrity is what keeps his life interesting and makes it worthwhile. The idea of going against society’s rules is a key part of the song. In the song the speaker says, “These dreams are what I live for, Not slaving to retire,” which echoes the same idea of “setting aside arbitrary rules,” from Huie’s quote. Both speakers are urging the reader to take some risk in order to live life to the fullest.

Journal #2 – 2/8/06 – Scooter McGee’s essay, “School Uniforms Equals School Success” talks about how high schools all over the country are implementing a school uniform policy in order to cut out gang violence and bullying. In your own words, explain if you think it is a good idea for students to wear mandatory uniforms in high school. Use specific detailed examples to support your point. Make sure that you consider other points of view.

It can be tough to be a teenager some times. We have to follow our parents’ rules, the school’s rules, and society’s rules. People are constantly telling teenagers how to live and how to act. Forcing high school students to wear a school uniform is just another way to tell teenagers what to do. In fact, I don’t think that forcing high school students to wear uniforms is a good idea at all.

One reason wearing school uniforms is a bad idea is because it encourages conformity and a heard like mentality. People are not all the same. We don’t all look like one another, act like one another, or think like one another, so why should we have to dress like one another? This idea of conformity just promotes the idea that we should all try to be alike or think one way. However, it is our differences that make us unique and that allow us to have a positive effect on the world around us. For example, if I learn to express myself in a comfortable way it allows me to visually share my thoughts and feelings with my peers. If I am wearing a shirt representing my favorite band someone might see it and check out that band. Someone might come up to me at tell me they like that band too. And even if someone doesn’t like my shirt or the band it allows them to think about their own interests and reflect on their life. Allowing students to dress how they want encourages individuality and self-expression, even if a lot of teenagers simply conform to popular fashion trends.

People like Scooter McGee think that wearing school uniforms are a necessary way to get rid of bullying and gang violence. I can see Scooter’s point that eliminating popular gang colors from school uniforms helps keep gang activity to a low. He shows that gang activity in Maryland’s school district decreased 10% after implementing uniforms. However, having students wear the same clothes doesn’t get rid of the social hierarchy found in most American high schools. Jocks are still jocks and the chess club still plays chess. Wearing the same clothes as someone else doesn’t eliminate the fact you are different or that you might get made fun of.

Journal #3 - 2/15/06 – *Point Break* Free Write – Write freely about your thoughts and feelings regarding the movie *Point Break*. Your response must be at least 15 sentences long and will be worth 15 points.

Spoiler Alert! The movie *Point Break* is an exhilarating movie that captures the idea of carpe diem. It lionizes a group of rogue bank robbing surfers that cruise around the country, robbing banks and looking for thrills. The character Bodhi (Patrick Swayze) is the ultimate anti-conformist. Bodhi combines spiritual ideas with his anti-establishment attitude to be a truly heroic. However, Bodhi runs up against the ultimate nemesis in Johnny Utah (Keanu Reeves) is willing to put his personal safety in danger to find self-actualization and to stop the dangerous surf crew from pulling another heist. Johnny goes undercover as a free thinking beginning surfer who is simply trying to find himself. Bodhi sees the potential greatness in Johnny and quickly takes him under his wing as his pupil.

Things get hairy for Johnny when he has to make the decision to fully immerse himself into the criminal life and follow the ways of the master Bodhi or continue his work to bring down the bank robbing surfers. Johnny is accompanied by his illustrious partner Frank Smith (Gary Busey) who keeps Johnny’s head on straight. Frank is constantly having to keep Johnny on the right path, acting as his moral compass.

Eventually Bodhi and Utah go sky diving, but the Bodhi has something up his sleeve. His psycho friend Rosie is holding Tyler hostage after she finds out that Utah isn't a lawyer but a cop and runs off after holding Johnny at gun point. Rosie threatens to kill Tyler and the only way Johnny can save her is by helping surfing gang in one last heist. But Bodhi makes a fatal error, he gets greedy and goes for the vault, over extending their time and losing a crew member, as well as killing an off duty cop who tries to be a hero. Johnny is knocked out by a maddened Bodhi and left to be arrested by his own force

Journal #4 - 2/23/06 - “Good judgment comes from experience, and often experience comes from bad judgment.” Explain what the quote means. Use specific examples to support your point. Explain how the meaning of the quote can be found in the movie *Point Break*.

We all have done bad things and learned from them. That’s where our wisdom and experience comes from. When you’re young and wild and sneak out of the house and your parents ground you because they found out, that’s an experience you don’t want to go through again. That creates your wisdom. Hopefully that wisdom will give you a better judgment next time you think about sneaking out.

The idea of wisdom and judgement can also been found in point break. Johnny learns what is good because he is a cop and is trying to catch the bank robbers. Bodhi also learns about good judgement from his bad experiences. At the end of the movie Johnny tells Bodhi that he is going to jail for all of the bad things that he has done.

It’s hard having good judgment before first having bad judgment. We have to do bad things sometimes to figure out what is good. I have learned a lot of wisdom from the things I have done. Wisdom is important because it helps you not get in trouble anymore. From now on I will have good judgement.