

## **The Third International Conference on Linguistics, Literature and Culture: 'Mapping the Spectrum: Current and Emerging Perspectives in Linguistics, Literature and Culture'**

### **Of hope and reality: The challenge of unity, diversity and inclusion, Malaysia as a mirror**

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*E pluribus unum* (trans: 'out of many, one') is found on the seals of the President and Vice President, Congress and Senate of the USA. The popular rendition is 'unity in diversity,' a slogan adopted by Benefica Football Club, Portugal in 1904, as *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* a motto written on the Indonesian emblem, and also found on the House of Blues emblem when it was first opened at Harvard Square in 1992. The pre-occupation of societies around the world with the phrase, slogan or motto 'unity and diversity' only reflects the ever present of the element of heterogeneity within each of the societies, such as a variety of ethnic categories, social classes, gender, generational difference and groups, political orientation, religious beliefs, languages and dialects, and others. Therefore, the main task of the organic society has always been to contend with the struggle of the opposites and the ultimate challenge to create unity. There are at least four driving forces of the 'unity and struggle of the opposites' phenomenon, namely, (i) as an organic system society contains inner contradictions; (ii) the contradiction is continually resolved and reproduced; (iii) the contradiction is further complicated by the fact that each of the relatively independent external opposites is in itself contradictory; and (iv) only through the complete resolution of the contradictions that unity could be realized. How would one capture the search for unity through the struggle of the opposites articulated in various forms and the effort at resolving contradiction? If unity is yet to be achieved, what do exists that pre-empts it and what do you call it? The presentation shall attempt to answer these epistemological questions through observing, ontologically, how Malaysia navigates through the years with its struggle of the opposites in trying to fulfill the ultimate aim to create unity, indeed inclusion too, and what exactly it has achieved thus far. It shall draw some examples from experiences in other countries for comparative purposes.

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