

## **Rumblings in the Academia: Arresting the Decline of Humanities**

**Prof. Dato' Dr. Md Salleh Yaapar  
Universiti Sains Malaysia**

**In the West, recent history shows that economic downturns often led to decreased enrollment in the humanities which generally includes disciplines such as languages, literature, religion, philosophy, history, the arts, and cultural studies. Within the present developments, in which on the one hand science and technology have been given prominence and on the other unemployment is on the rise, while universities are experiencing cutbacks, the relevance of the humanities is being questioned even more. Within the Malaysian academia too science and technology occupy the center stage while humanities sit on the margin. It is commonly thought that humanities do not contribute to the progress of a nation. Of course, this is completely false. My paper will suggest that to arrest the decline of humanities, the people within the disciplines themselves must seriously fight for their relevance and justify the continued existence of humanities. They must convince the stake holders that the humanities enrich critical thinking, illuminate the human condition and, most of all, make human humans. Without humanities, science and technology can only produce humanoids. However, scholars of humanities too need to reinvent their outlook and explain the true nature and meaning of their disciplines. They must show how the humanities actually do not assume detached postures, and are not elitist, insubstantial and intangible, but can relate to changing developments and provides rigorous tangible skills for dealing with real life situations within societies and cultures.**