

## PROGRAMME

2.00 pm – 2.10 pm	Introduction by moderator: <b>Dr Shazlin Amir Hamzah</b> <b>Research Fellow KITA</b>
2.10 pm – 2.50 pm	Panelist: <b>Dr Adil Johan, KITA-UKM</b> <b>Dr Ch'ng Xin Ying, UCSI</b> <b>Dr Jeremy Leong, UCSI</b> <b>Assoc. Prof. Dr. Shanthini Pillai, USM</b> <b>(Discussant)</b>
2.50 pm – 3.00 pm	<b>Assoc. Prof. Dr. Shanthini Pillai, UKM</b> <b>(Discussant)</b>
3.00 pm – 3.30 pm	<b>Discussion Session:</b> <b>Panelists and Discussant</b>
3.30 pm – 4.00 pm	Q & A Session with audience Closing

### About KITA Discourse Series

KITA Discourse Series provides a platform for interested scholars and graduate students to present his or her ideas on any social issues pertaining to ethnicity which may be subsequently published in UKM Ethnic Studies Paper Series. For further information, please email [rachelchansuetkay@ukm.edu.my](mailto:rachelchansuetkay@ukm.edu.my).



### KITA Series Discourse 4/2021

**Listening to Namewee:  
Contestations and Reconciliations of a Malaysian  
Chinese Rap Icon**

**Panelist:**  
**Dr Adil Johan, KITA-UKM**  
**Dr Ch'ng Xin Ying, UCSI**  
**Dr Jeremy Leong, UCSI**  
**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Shanthini Pillai, UKM (Discussant)**  
**Dr Shazlin Amir Hamzah, KITA-UKM (Moderator)**

**9th December 2021 (Thursday)**

**2.00 pm – 4.00 pm**

**This seminar will be broadcasted on:  
Zoom & KITA Facebook Live**

## ABSTRACT

Malaysian Chinese rapper Namewee (Wee Meng Chee) has been subject to the policing and prosecution of Malaysia's state authorities since 2007. Most recently, he drew controversy with the international release of his award-winning film *Babi* (2020). The film's producer was recently charged in court for not obtaining licenses to film and promote the film in Malaysia.

This panel uncovers the varying degrees of surveillance and policing experienced by the artist in his home country by analysing three case studies of Namewee's music videos – 'Nah' (2010), 'Oh My God' (2016) and 'Happy Family' (2020). Through narrative themes that critique the major religious beliefs and education system in Malaysia, he provokes the conservative state and public sphere with sentiments and themes that challenge the ethnonational Malay-Muslim hegemony. Interestingly, he has over the years, eluded prosecution by the authorities in positioning his creative output as expressions of free speech. Namewee's influential subversive position as de facto advocate for racial equality in Malaysia gives reason for the state to monitor and persecute him actively; but the moralistic message of his creative works also, in turn, serve to police the injustices of the state.

## PRESENTER'S PROFILE

**ADIL JOHAN** is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA), The National University of Malaysia (UKM). His research and publications consider popular music, cultural studies, interculturalism and the politics of ethnonationalism in the Malay world and Southeast Asia.

**CH'NG XIN YING** is a Lecturer in Music at UCSI University, Institute of Music. She teaches Western art music history, music theory and writing. Her research interests are particularly on cultural identity issues, especially in relation to studies of voice, gender and nation.

**JEREMY LEONG** is Assistant Professor of Musicology at UCSI University Institute of Music. He also has a background in ethnomusicology, history, and cultural studies. His research and publications focus on Western musical and philosophical influences in China, identity politics, musical diaspora, and musical orientalism. He teaches Western art and popular music, as well as music research methods.

**SHANTHINI PILLAI Shanthini Pillai (PhD)** is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, the National University of Malaysia (UKM). Her research interests are anchored primarily in ethnic diversity, diaspora and transnationalism in literary and cultural texts with particular reference to the global South Asian diaspora. She has headed a number of research projects on transnationalism and cultural identity and has also participated in transnational research projects.

**SHAZLIN AMIR HAMZAH** is a research fellow at the Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA), , the National University of Malaysia. Her PhD is in ethnic studies focusing on communication researching nation branding and the role of popular patriotic songs in the construction of national identity. Her research interests include national identity, nations and nationalism, ethnosymbolism and the heritage of popular music.