

In-Depth Interview Transcript

Kamil Othman

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Researcher: Hi. My name is Amir. I am a PhD candidate at the Department of Media Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, University of Malaya. My intention of conducting this interview is to identify the future of Malaysian animation content and identity. I would like to have your thoughts with regards to a few issues here. My first question, can you share your thoughts with regards to Malaysian animation content and identity in general?

Kamil: I would actually put the current state at a time when Malaysia is just reaching the technical proficiency level. So basically I think Malaysians are getting used to the tools right now to express what they want to express. But we still have some issues with the way the stories are being expressed. Why I say this is because I have a feeling that all these years especially from MDeC's point of view, we have actually exposed Malaysians to the world as a market. So Malaysians are just coming out from the previous mindset, in which animation was initially meant for the domestic market. So I suppose this would be the same thing for the cinema as well. Everything that has been written, everything that has been done is really domestic-centric. That's what we've been doing all these years. So now that people know what the rest of the world want, then they have to readjust. So they have to adjust the process that's going on.

Researcher: How good or how bad is it right now?

Kamil: Maybe I can put it this way. For proficiency in using the tools to create the animation, I think we have actually resolved that. What we have not resolved is the innovation and the creative part that comes at the story-telling level. So, we can tell a story but not enough to push it into what I call a universal mould, the way that some countries know their script as Spongebob can become universally acceptable. Like Spongebob, is it from the US or from the UK? It can be anything. The minute you translate or you dub that, as a concept, it is so universal. We are still at the realm of when our Sang Kancil will be known to the world. We are still trapped in that situation. But technically we are good.

Researcher: So how do you think your organization, which is MDeC, contributes towards developing animation in Malaysia.

Kamil: We began on the premise that we had to bring Malaysian culture to the outside world as far back as 1999. So basically the logic was what would be the best

vehicle by which Malaysian culture and Malaysian values can be exposed to the world? You can write as many books as you want but it all depends on people reading it. But you can make a good animation series, provided you know how to position it well and many homes and millions of eyeballs can reach the thing. That is why animation became the medium by which this focus is on. MdeC, all the while since 2000, have been doing a few critical things. One is mining the talent. We have to mine the talents. Because of that, we have yearly events like the Intellectual Property Creators Challenge or known as IPCC. The whole idea is for talent mining situation. Now, having won those kind of prizes under IPCC, we would then take care of the people who won because they would be winning only on ideas and concepts that have not been put into much thought. It's just a germ of an idea. So the next phase is that we bring them up into the pre-commercialization stage. So, it's mining the talent. After mining the talent, we bring them to pre-commercialization. Then, during the pre-commercialization stage, we expose them to the world markets. So we bring them to Korea, to France, wherever to let them see with their own eyes. Because, you see, by that time they already have the story. But now you need something that you can sell to Disney Channel, you need something that the French would buy. Last time when we were dealing with RTM, it was easy. Everything goes. The fourth part is to give them the funding. Because the government has given you their funding, so now you can go to your bid-budget production. And because it's a very expensive thing,, you also have the distributor under your belt.

Researcher: So how effective has it been.

Kamil: Well, if you consider that 10 years ago there was no Upin & Ipin, 10 years ago there was no Boboiboy, there was no Saladin, so I think with all that we have done, with all the seeds that we've planted from 1999 onwards, I think about in 2006, because that was the year when Malaysian animation started to appear on Disney Channel, Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network or these areas which previously we did not enter, so we met our challenge.

Researcher: So for the past five years, how has the trend in demand for Malaysian animation been?

Kamil: The demand is a very contentious issue because we were hoping that the demand would come from somewhere within, from Malaysia itself. But somehow the Malaysian broadcasters, because all of them either have subsidiaries themselves supplying them content, they are not hungry enough to take up the content produced by government-funded projects. In terms of that, I see a very dangerous trend here because Malaysian animation is not really

being supported by the Malaysian broadcasters themselves. This is what I mean. It's not about just getting them to broadcast, it's about payments. They would sometimes give bad deals to Malaysian producers. That's because the broadcasters are in the position of buyers. They just sit there like a buyer. So for them, whether that is a local animation or a syndicated animation, it doesn't make any difference to them. What we would hope to see is basically the broadcasters starting to invest in the content development. Number one, the budget can be bigger. And number two, because you have invested in something, then you will make sure the quality is good, so we can be involved during script development. But no. Currently today, all the Malaysian broadcasters, including RTM, are just sitting there like buyers. The it makes people like us, who have been funding all these animation, finding it difficult. You see, we are using government funds to produce the animation. Why do I make animation? Because I need to sell. I need for it to be broadcasted. But our local broadcasters are still behaving like that. So MdeC has no choice but to go overseas. So we broke the overseas market. So that is why Saladin now is in 18 countries and some of those like Boboiboy seem to be very encouraging in these countries. What we do is we facilitate. We are not a marketing arm but we bring them to marketing events.

Researcher: How about those animation that have been to overseas markets? How have they been received?

Kamil: As a source of income, television income is the least profitable of all. However, we are seeing that as being the promotional aspect of it because the answer with animation is actually the licensing and merchandizing that comes after something has become a brand. So, in short, our biggest challenge right now is not only trying to sell the titles overseas but also to try and find better ways to turn them into brands so that somebody will see it as like it is with Ben10. Why do we say that? Because like Spongebob, Spongebob and Ben10 has one thing in common with Upin & Ipin. They are already brands, meaning that people will already be familiar with what they represent. Other than the cultural part, it is also about the merchandizing part. You could see the icons on watches and pencil boxes for kids. So that is the one that will sustain in the industry. So if they ask me, how much have we made, very little. But that's because we are now in that phase where we are creating the brand.

Researcher: In your views, what are the challenges actually faced by the animation industry here in this country.

Kamil: The challenges right now faced by the animation industry is because of the fragmented agencies trying to help them develop. I don't know if you want to take it as an MdeC or a personal view. I suppose I can say this after 13 years in the industry, the biggest problem now is that while the government is very keen to get this industry up and running and even to accept this as an economic growth area, but what the government has not done is to rationalize the number of agencies and ministries that handle this industry development. Because each would be developing it on its own terms which may not all go well when we see it as a total. Let me give you an example. RTM is still buying animation, but they are commissioning it only to fill in their hours. Is exportability part of their plan?

Researcher: No. Just to fill the hours.

Kamil: Yes. Just to fill the hours. So money are given to banks who have no experience in funding these kind of things, so how do you expect the money to duplicate the system? In other countries, money like that is given to institutions that are already experienced. Australia used to have a funding board for the National Film Funding Corporation. That's where all the funds are. These people? No. Yes, they still make mistakes. Out of that, still 20% is good and 80% is bad. But if you give to people who don't know anything about this, chances are the success rate is only 5%. So, that's fragmented. MdeC has funding for animation. Last time, SKMM (Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission) also had funding for animation. FINAS (National Film Development Corporation Malaysia) now also says they have funding for animation. If everybody is getting funds for animation, where is that central strategy that holds everything together? Doing animation is not only about giving the money. We have to look into the skills, like you said earlier. It's not all about money. It's not about giving somebody RM100 million to do animation. Do you think we can achieve an Oscar or Academy Awards standards? The answer is no. Why? Because we haven't got writers here. We don't have production designers. We don't have musicians who can write excellent theme songs which is another spin-off from animation. We don't have all that. But the government is still trying to help. But to achieve all that, you don't pass it to 10 people or six people trying to develop the industry. Only go for one. That one head is accountable and the KPI (key performance indicators) can be very easy; one Malaysian animation must go to the Academy Awards. Every year, Malaysian animation must be nominated. Then one KPI for the industry. Now that kind of KPI and six agencies are handling it, who is supposed to coordinate? And then the worst part is, the real people who could be doing the animation are not being seen because between all the six agencies, it's all spread out. So we find a lot of people who are not the

real McCoy, those who are not sincere, those who just want the money. They just appear out of nowhere just to get some money and come up with mediocre products. There is no centralized institution. That is how I feel about it.

Researcher: Are you aware of how the local audience is receptive towards the local animation?

Kamil: When we talk about animation, we in MdeC are actually talking about children's animation. Animation can also be for adults. So our focus area has been animation for children. If you look at animation in terms of children's take-up, we have commissioned a study called Viewing Habits of Animation. There are some data there about children and what is their favourite program and they are watching it through what. You'll be surprised, probably no surprise, that most of them are not watching it through your traditional TV at home, but they are watching it through their iPads and whatnot. Anyway, the point is this. The menu for Malaysia has fortunately changed for the children's programming diet. So in other words, they would be watching Ben10, they would be watching Boboiboy, they would be watching Disney Channel or whatever on the same par. Some of them don't even know that some of the things they have been watching are actually local, like Supa Strikas. People will watch because they are football fans. In that sense, our study will show you right now that there has been an increase in the acceptance by Malaysian children. It is only that adult cartoons that we don't have the figures. What I mean by adults are teenagers. That one we don't have the facts. But if you ask me, acceptance? Yes. Children are there. A typical example, we go to an orphanage. We would find that their collection of DVDs contain Ultraman, Upin & Ipin, there is also Spongebob or Naruto. Before, you would find that there aren't any Malaysian titles in their collections. But now they do. If you ask them whether they know that Bola Kampung is local, they would say that they don't know. So that means that for them, it is no different from Spongebob or Ben10. Which is good because it means that we can now supply to our market, which now you are neutral. Whether it works well for the cultural part, it doesn't matter because the minute when you say it's neutral but the Malaysian-ness is still there. It's still Bola Kampung. It's still Badang.

Researcher: But talking about the Malaysian-ness of animation, in your personal view, what makes Malaysian animation Malaysian.

Kamil: This is not going to be an academic answer. I personally believe that in whatever you do, when you write a novel, that novel will have elements of Malaysia even if try hard not to show it. You can't help it. If you eat belacan (shrimp paste), you

would have to have elements of that. So a typical Malaysian animation I would say as 1) it is reflective of what we really are. The honest part of it which is like Upin & Ipin, although it tries to show what Malaysians really are, there is still the real Malaysian flavor and there's the forced Malaysian behavior. So the forced behavior is when we have to show in Malaysian animation what actually we secretly really desire like racial harmony, like Ali, Muthu and Ah Chong all together. So it does express that desire, which like everybody says, should be together. But in terms of the natural style, what we still have is that Malay animation is still for Malays, just like the movies. Chinese animation is still for Chinese. Indian animation is still for Indians. That is the reality. And one of our challenges is to see where the common ground is to burn these two. Sure, Upin & Ipin has made some attempts in getting Benggalis in, as with Boboiboy. That's what I meant. As Malaysian, first of all it reflects what we secretly desire. But you go back to your own comfort level, all you have if you're Malay, are Malay content. If Indian, then Indian content. Why? Is it because of the language? Or is it because of religion? I don't know. I don't think that plays much role. But when we were talking earlier about Japan, Japan is homogenous. They are all Japanese. There's only one language. So if we ask them what is their national food, if a foreigner were to ask a Japanese, nobody would have any arguments. Then they would say sushi. In Malaysia, it depends on who you are asking the question. You ask a Malay, you will get Malay answers. You ask a Chinese, you will get Chinese answers. Some common things like Rojak, Rendang. Even rendang is very much Malay. So it depends. That is our challenge.

Researcher: But then if that's the case, how would the audience from the rest of the world differentiate between Malaysian animation with the others.

Kamil: That's why when we, MdeC, go and market these Malaysian animation, we use the label just Malaysian. That's why, one of my wish is that Tourism Malaysia can come hand-in-hand with us in marketing this thing. Because in a way, we are marketing the country also. Why do I say Tourism Malaysia? Because the animation that we're sending out is really about a country that is multi-racial. Different faith, different culture, different food. But despite the difference, there is something uniquely Malaysian when you see it in an integrated way. Like when you talk about Nasi Lemak. Nasi Lemak is right now slowly becoming an integrated cuisine. So we always encourage our animators that everytime they produce animation, include Nasi Lemak as well because that one looks more common. Chinese, Indians all eat Nasi Lemak. So, those are the kind of things that we're doing. What I find is that what we say about Malaysia, most of them who do not know about Malaysia at all will find it easy to identify that this is the melting pot of Asia. So this ties back to tourism, Malaysia Truly Asia. That's

what we want. Because their parents could be seeing CNN and whatnot and they notice the Malaysia Truly Asia tagline, so the children also watch Malaysian content. So children normally ask parents what they think of this. The parents may say that, yes, Malaysia is a melting pot. That's all we should be taking advantage of. Is there anything original, anything new about that? Singapore is doing it now. Singapore animation is all about Singapore being the melting pot of Asia. In their animation, they are trying to say things like banana leaf are theirs. That's what they're doing. They still have Indian-looking characters, their Samys, their Ah Chongs and their Mats. They have it because they are Singaporean animation. But because Singapore is more Chinese-centric, so you will see most of the background, the proportion is more heavy towards the Chinese parts of Singapore. You can't help it. While in Malaysia, the animation that we see, like Boboiboy, they try to be progressive and move out from that Malayness. They try to make it as open as possible. In a way Malaysia has an identity crisis, but then it has nothing to do with what we are talking. I feel we are sometimes confused Malaysian race.

Researcher: If that is the case, what do you think about industry efforts in promoting Malaysian identity through animation. Have they been effective?

Kamil: Well, the industry is another little problem. Their problem is that they have been, so far right now, very few are actually entrepreneurs that are coming out from a private passion or private hungry mould. It's all supported by the government. The government is sometimes funding up to 90% of their production. So in that kind of situation, you don't have an industry. But you have a lot of charity. And in that kind of environment, you can't create that artistic mould that will push Malaysian identity and all that. You can't. I have not seen any evidence of it. Even Upin & Ipin also, they're supposed to be rich and all that, still depending on government funds to do the things that they do. In Hollywood, LA and all that, you will drop to the floor. But you learn, you wake up and then you become something else. So over here, they're so pampered by the government. That's why I said the government must switch off and one of the things we are trying to do right now is trying to find alternatives, means of funding all this. It shouldn't just be government money, you know. Why should I open up a stationery store when I'm not interested in selling stationery? You know it's going to be a disaster. When I was in Shell, people who run petrol stations can even make money. If you don't devote 80%, 90% of your time to it, it will still collapse. Malaysia is charitable. We have a lot of 'granterpreneurs' here. Not entrepreneurs but people who depend on grants. Why isn't this industry moving up? I'll tell you why. One, the market is no big enough to sustain and besides, we are split into different demographics, Indians, Malays.

So you won't find one superstar that can make millions. When was the last time you heard any artist here really making money. Well, Siti Nurhaliza, cheating because she got married to a rich family and maybe she can make money on her own. But she's an exception. The rest? The majority? No. If we're talking about all these AC Mizals, they are just one in a thousand. Even that is not sustainable. What happened to the rest? Do we have the kind of demand power that can sustain us for a year and all that? No. Why? Because when you produce animation, you ask yourself, who watches them? If you produce Upin & Ipin, the only ones who watch are Malays. Even those Malays who watch them are from rural areas because the Malays in urban areas are used to Ben10 and Hannah Montana on Disney XD. So, that's where the problem is. What we need right now is something more than what we are doing now. I do not know how I can put it to you, but MdeC's main role, or my personal role over the last 10 years is to try to find out more than what is happening right now. Because we know all those elements already. Now, where is the answer coming from? Well, I think the answer can come from policy, from playing around with law and legislation that forces our broadcasters to stop behaving bias. It could be like that. In terms of the industry, they should learn. A business works because there is always a demand. Because all this industry is a supply. You only need to supply if there is demand. Our problem now is that the supply part is not the issue. The demand part is. To depend on the rest of the world is difficult because not everybody can accept Boboiboy in North America, in a place where they have a lot of other things. So there is always something else.

Researcher: Well, it's not fair for me to ask question number 9 because MdeC actually represents the government. So I'm going to skip this question. So I am going to go to question number 10. If that is the case based on what you explained, where do you think the future of Malaysian animation is heading?

Kamil: The future of Malaysian animation lies in the use of animation technology for other things. Remember, we talk about animation here. We talked only about the entertainment side but we have a 'beyond entertainment' agenda. This is where animation is used. So previously we were talking about how paper and pen was invented to write only children's stories. Now we are entering the area where the pen can now write on the paper, scientific things, medical things, religious things, information things. That's where we are entering right now. The good thing about animation is that later, animation will be the best form of expression. It's not just for entertainment. It can be about as simple as the *solat*, you can use 3D animation. So it's not a waste. The same people that we are training right now in 3D animation, the same people can be used by the people in Proton, by EON to design a new car. They can be used by DBKL for 3D simulation of urban planning. They can also be used by FMM low food plastic to

design the next container. But they can also be used by the medical profession to design the human heart so that later when you have other things like tele-health and all that, the doctor can explain to you. More importantly, it can go straight to that education mode. It's digital animation, it's the best way to represent things. So to me, that is where we should be heading. The entertainment side is there but we shouldn't be saying that animation is all there is to animation. Animation comes from the Greek word, to animate, bring something to life. So, what is it? We have our education sector that requires simulation. I can tell history lessons right now by visualizing what Parameswara was like during the founding of Malacca. Why isn't Malaysia heading towards this direction yet? Because there are no policies.

Researcher: So in terms of technical capabilities, is MdeC seeking further improvements?

Kamil: Yes. We have a scholarship system here. I mean right now, what do you want to study? Augmented reality? Be my guest. We have had the scholarship for a year and a half but no takers. And then we are always accused of not campaigning. I said, my goodness. I put it on a website but then people just don't come. So what are we? Malaysians, we are not a hungry nation. We are not really a hungry nation. We only know how to complain. We don't have this and that. Like the development fund I was talking about. How long has it been around? We put it on websites across universities, still, people don't read. Malaysia is a country where action speaks louder than words. The success of Upin & Ipin have actually made a lot of people stop whatever they are doing and open up animation studios because they hear stories about millions being made. Upin & Ipin was a gamble for us at one time. The gamble was this, they were also thinking like everybody else. Animation which was different than the rest. To stamp the US imports from coming in. So, they were right. US imports are all about US culture. They think hot dogs are cool, Kentucky Fried Chicken, burgers are all cool. So where is the local equivalent that makes eating *cincalok* cool. So Upin & Ipin was born out of that thing. But guess what, the main person there was a businessman. He was the least artistic person. You know Haji Borhan, right? He was smart enough to go to MMU to attend the convocation and then saw the work of the final year students. So that's where he picked up his first batch of animators. So that's what we need now. The business side married to the artistic side. Not just to help the animation industry but to help the other industries also. So right now, it is the government who is fulfilling the role of the business. The government is only a temporary gatekeeper. Later, it should go to the Mydins of the world. That's why I am a firm believer, because of my finance background, I am a firm believer in tax. If there are fiscal incentives in creative, people like Mydin will start investing in this. And when they do, there will be

one new element that comes in, the return of investment in their part. I give you RM1 million, don't think you can escape just like that. I need to see what is my return. It will force the creative people to also become business savvy which is not happening right now because 90% of them are funded by the government. If we want to summarize, yes, the government has been putting money into this area. There is already a success story. So right now, I'm saying the raw materials are there. It just needs one more spark to emerge and that is the business side. Because it is the business side which will force Malaysians to understand markets. Right now, they don't even understand the market that they are in. MDeC has to do that. My department is the one that has to go and tell them that girls' animation are currently selling better than the boys'. And even that, we can divide. Either four to eight-year-olds. The pre-school girls. Up to that level. The government is still doing the job. But if you are a businessman, you don't open a shop selling beef in a community of Indian Hindus who don't eat beef. That's about the nearest thing I can give as an example. So that's our next challenge, the business part. The minute that starts, then the banks will start to come in. Right now, the banks are afraid to handle it. Mention the word of doing animation, banks are all scared because this is the least ROI.

Researcher: It is interesting that you mention the beef example because in terms of the identity in these animation, where is that heading?

Kamil: First and foremost, I am also a film buff because I watch a lot of movies. It's not just watching, I also analyze, try to see it as a work of art of the people behind making it. If I apply the same rules for animation, a lot of animation in Malaysia do not have that strong cultural, nationalistic background. Why? Because most are creating it on the basis that, to get commercialized, you need to have something that is fun and accessible and doesn't inject the mind. In other words, they are following the same examples as the Americans. But what they don't understand is that Americans have the advantage of putting subliminal text even into their animation which makes it easy for them to embed their cultural values in their animation into people without people knowing it. And they in fact have one big advantage, they are affecting our young. Because parents do not watch. So their teachers right now are their animation. That's why it is easy for a Malaysian kid today to be raised. You can go to McDonalds very easily. Since they were young, french fries is not an issue. Tell me how many American animation which doesn't have Coke or soda or fries or something to do with that, the ones going for drive-ins and all that? So, that's one example. So if you tell me where we are heading, we need to have that cultural policy instituted for the country. That cultural thing that says that everything that we do is consciously shown to other nations, what we really are.

Does it mean that everybody must do animation like Upin & Ipin? No. It could be part of our history, a book like the ones by A. Samad Said. And this is where we go to another realm using animation as real storytelling. Remember like Futurama that exist as an animated series? I runs week by week. It's normal for them. The effectiveness is when they reinforce this all the time. You watch Ben10 three times a day, you'll get it. These are all commercial-driven things. So why is it popular around the world until people cry watching them? You see, people don't cry watching animation, but this one, a lot of people cry. Because, after a while, you forget that it is an animation. Can Malaysia reach that standard? If you ask me, yes, we can? But they must have good material. You see, after a while people watch Grave of the Fireflies, they don't realize that they are watching an animation and that is exactly the effect that we want. After a while, they just get absorbed into the story the same way you get absored five minutes into White House Down, you get straight into the story. So this is where the power of animation comes in which we haven't exploited yet. The part where we use animation to tell a story. Now for children, it is just about telling the story, like Ben10. It's like showing anything in 20 minutes but that is the perfect vehicle to creating the brand. But the other type is the cultural carrier where it is based and we take up the story from. You ask me, what Malaysian stories can we do? Plenty. If you have a look at some of the novels like *Ranjau Sepanjang Jalan*, but that one maybe a little too complicated. But maybe *Patah Sayap Terbang Jua*, you know, that kind of thing. It can all be turned. Even 2D is fine. It doesn't have to be 2D or 3D. Right now everybody here thinks that 3D is the best. No, 2D can still work. The one I said befor, Grave of the Fireflies is 2D. Why don't you go all the way back to Disney, the few animation that the Americans normally cry or have much watching are the Walt Disneys. All of the Walt Disney classics are in 2D. So that is the quality of the story. Everybody knows. What is the difference between that? You ask me, do you want to reach the level of Disney? I would say, yes. Why? Because that is driven by passion and that is also driven by this obsession for perfection but using animation as the medium. We have a lot of mythical stories. But you see, Snow White is not a copyrighted work. It's a public domain. And yet, when you think about Snow White, you only think about the Disney version. So in Malaysia, if we talk about Pak Pandir, why can't we have a Malaysian version of Pak Pandir? When I meet my artiste friends, they all say that it is possible but we don't have the money. You see? It all comes back to that. I firmly believe that money is only one part of the equation. I don't know how to explain. But it's been like there always hasn't been enough money. But it is worthwhile as an issue. Maybe you can create forums. Just ask. Because I don't have the answers, but maybe 10 other people do. So we're asking, what is really the problem here? If you ask me, is it the lack of talent? No. I will tell you personally. If I am living in the kind of environment in the west right now, I would be writing

books. I wouldn't be working here because secretly I want to be a writer. But in Malaysia, if I were to write a book, how do you think I'm going to make a living? Our population is 26 million. If it is 26 million Malays, it is ok. If Malaysians did not have religious barriers, it's fine. But when the government is pouring money, supposedly it is for all. But when you do it, it increases the audience number but still within the realm of the same race. None of which are horizontal. Malay productions are still targeted at Malays. Well, I hope all this isn't too much.

Researcher: Well, I think that has covered most of what is needed.

Kamil: If you say future direction of animation, as a technology tool, it's not a stranger to Malaysian animation industry because everybody's aware. Software such as Adobe, Maya, ToonBoom, everyone knows them. But that's just a bit like me telling everybody how to write. But whether you can write a Nobel Prize-winning book or not, it's another story. So what is the story? That is the same answer for this. The future direction is how can Malaysia produce Nobel Prize or Booker Prize winners? Why is it that Tash Aw, who is Malaysian-born, had to go to England, write a book, then win an award. What would have happened to Tash Aw if he stayed here? Maybe he wouldn't write. So immediately when you look at those kinds of issues, we can all ask, how many Nobel Prize potential winners that are now in Malaysia and they don't even know they can be Nobel Prize winners? How many researchers and universities right now who could become Nobel Prize for physics, biology or whatever. Those who are here but do not know that they had it. That is the measurement of a nation standard. So when people say that Malaysia has become a very advanced nation, I would say that I disagree. Malaysia is very advanced in terms of what money can buy. But it is not advanced in a natural evolution of our attitude and our mindset. I don't know if that would take another whole philosophy but the connection is that animation is the branch of the creative industry. The creative industry is an industry that is build around individual creativity that can be monetized. That's what it's all about. I think of something and make money out of it. That is what this industry is all about. So any other sub-ecosystem that doesn't support in giving me my freedom of thinking will not help this industry, animation included. That's why even our film industry is in trouble. Like what we were talking about just now. Animation is part of the creative industry. Film and television are also part of the creative industry. So the creative industry is the mother of all. What is happening to the new generation of people who are going to hold the future of this industry? Has anybody looked at the curriculum in primary one? How old is your son?

Researcher: Nine.

Kamil: Nine? How is it in school? Do you think creativity died when they enter primary one?

Researcher: I suppose so.

Kamil: Yes. I know. That's why I send them to private school. People tell me that when I send my children to private school, I'm showing off. It's not about that. It hurts my pocket every month having to fork out extras but in the school in Section 13, Shah Alam, I saw that creativity was dead. I consider my children creative because since they were very young, I taught them drawing and all that, music. When they entered school, it all perished. I asked, what happened? Then I had to send to a private school. Although it's a private school, it applies the local curriculum. The best part is that after school, they have activities like plays, drama, theater, and poetry. That's what I want because you will be thankful for knowing these things. Sometimes you would curse the fact that you have to memorize poetry but later on when you become someone like an accountant, like me, this somehow makes be become a better accountant. My friends, better engineers. That's why when you see how we are right now, all homework based. So, this is the problem. That's the whole problem with this country right now. Our education system, our whole support system is only for the current generation. Where is the next one? Like I said, we say we miss P. Ramlee. How many potential P. Ramlees we have now who are aged from 8-10? For all you know, it's half a million. But then, they are oppressed. What is an artiste? The environment has to be correct, the support must be correct. Then it works. And the other thing about creative is that it must be continuously synergizing and then a lot of ideas come up. This is not an individual job that you do alone sitting in a corner and you expect to find inspiration. That's why at the beginning of our discussion I said the books are here. Now is just the matter of interpreting because one book, you can interpret it 10 times. Even the Bible has been interpreted numerous times. They can even interpret the Gospel. So when people say cencorship is the problem here, what are they worried about? They say that they can't do this and that. Well, even if they were told they can't, what are they thinking of doing in the first place? Corrupt policemen? I'm not interested to see a movie about a corrupt policeman? I'm more interested to see what makes a policeman corrupt because that one does not involve cencorship anymore. That one involves good writing. It's roughly what I tell people in forums and whatnot. So that's about it.

Researcher: Well, thank you very much, En. Kamil, for you valuable input. I truly appreciate your time, effort and sharing of information. Thanks again.

Kamil: You're welcome.