

Cinematic Acculturation Of Nattawut Poonpiriya's *Bad Genius*: Higher Education Under Neoliberalism As An Educational Catastrophe Depicting Homo Economicus

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Citation: Dr. Rupa Sarkar, Rohan Vijay Shandilya, (2024) Cinematic Acculturation Of Nattawut Poonpiriya's *Bad Genius*: Higher Education Under Neoliberalism As An Educational Catastrophe Depicting Homo Economicus, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(1), 1609-1618
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i1.6455

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Homo economicus attempts to address this inquiry by finishing up with the assistance of hypothetical conversations and scholarly portrayals. The present investigation examines Nattawut Poonpiriya's Thai heist film *Bad Genius* through the lens of higher education under neoliberalism, an educational catastrophe. Nattawut Poonpiriya's parody of higher education, *Bad Genius*, spoofs how higher education under neoliberalism standardizes skeptical personal responsibility as the reality of society and human instinct around economic events. *Bad Genius* is a thriller cinema released in 2017 that shares many similarities with higher education under neoliberalism. This article investigates the dynamics and narratology of what the research scholar mentions as higher education under neoliberalism using higher education as a theory machine. It argues a case for higher education under neoliberalism with its properties like student debt, commercialization of education, or reduced access to quality education. However, a comparison proves very fruitful since higher education and the movie *Bad Genius* investigate the extent to which poverty, frustration, hopelessness, and humiliation play a role in the complicated factors that reincarnate humans into *homo economicus* characters. Higher Education transactions represent a spatial consciousness in which higher education under neoliberalism seeps into exams-cheating schemes, corruption, and revenge.

On the contrary, *Bad Genius* goes so far as to explain cheating on international standardized tests, crime, and corruption in higher education concerning the transgressions routinely performed by *homo economicus* as they rise to the top of the cheating racket, startling the world in the instance of the international standardized test scandal for university admissions. Thus, higher education under neoliberalism stimulates relationships with a twist, rewriting the cinematic acculturation to communicate society's advantages and disadvantages. The global civilization continues to prioritize neoliberalism; higher education has become a high-stakes game in the context of higher education under neoliberal policies, often leading to reduced public funding for universities, increased tuition fees, and a market-oriented approach to education where students are becoming customers. *Bad Genius* is a thrilling and thought-provoking film that combines elements of heist cinema with a social commentary on the education system and the lengths to which some individuals are willing to go to achieve success. The cinema *Bad Genius* serves as a means of cultural transmission or socialization through cinema, possibly conveying cultural or societal values, including those related to neoliberalism and the pursuit of economic success. Through the power of cinema, we can learn to navigate this world and come out on top.

Keywords—Homo Economicus; *Bad Genius*; Cinema; Higher Education; Neoliberalism

INTRODUCTION

Our world is changing as we speak, social changes and technological changes, taking us beyond what we have known in a time where our language is about speed, productivity, and scalability; only a selected few understand that true success is rooted in the balance of work and leisure this balance starts from cinema. The magical aura of cinema is a fair indicator of a country's psyche, which may be responsible for its current state of being and which, in turn, may be affected by the turn of historical, political, and economic events¹ in a given time frame. "Cinema doesn't change the world—people do. And the finest films help people open their eyes and hearts to that possibility." (Oumano, Elena. *Cinema Today: A conversation with thirty-nine filmmakers from around the world*. Rutgers University Press, 2019.)

This essay unpacks the speculations of the standardized test² widely used for college admission in the United States, which challenges the role of higher education in our future and explores the shapes of higher education under neoliberalism³, an educational catastrophe⁴ depicting homo economicus⁵ (economic man) in the Thai heist film *Bad Genius*⁶. *Bad Genius*, also known as *Chalard Games Goeng* in Thai, is a 2017 heist thriller cinema produced by Jor Kwang Films and distributed by GDH 559. Nattawut Poonpiriya directed it, and it stars Chutimon Chuengcharoensukying in her feature film debut as Lynn, a straight-A student who devises an exam-cheating plan that eventually reaches worldwide levels.

Neoliberalism, the doctrine that market exchange is an ethic in itself, is a broadly used term that refers to an economic and political project that rose to prominence in the 1980s and continues to the present. Higher Education globally became *dark* in 2008 when the financial bubble burst⁷. It is a darkness that continues through the present moment. Catastrophe gives us a way to see how the neoliberal educational failures of the current generation can and will impact the world for generations to come. Whereas Di Leo in *Higher Education under Late Capitalism* (2017) shows how academic identity has been recalibrated by the neoliberal project, and in *Corporate Humanities in Higher Education* (2014), how the humanities have been reshaped by it. Moreover, in *Catastrophe and Higher Education* (2020), Di Leo argues that "the future of the humanities is tied to the fate of theory. Without the aid of diverse and critical forms of theory, higher education is always already vulnerable to the formidable and destructive forces of economic neoliberalism. Left to its own designs, these destructive forces will continue to eat away at the educational center of academe and replace it with a vocational training center. And once the educational center of higher education is replaced by this lower form of education, the argument for a bachelor's degree rather than a training certificate becomes increasingly more difficult to make especially if the immediate earning potential of the certificate is greater than the bachelor's degree. In sum, higher education under neoliberalism is an educational catastrophe. *Higher education under neoliberalism becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe*." (Di Leo, Jeffrey R. *Catastrophe and higher education: Neoliberalism, theory, and the future of the humanities*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

According to the researcher, higher education may be too little, too late to change the trajectory of disaster—we may need to learn how to live with catastrophe⁸. However, barring our biopolitical future as the death drive, this article intends to be an expedition of cinematic acculturation of the movie *Bad Genius* through catastrophic higher education depicting homo economicus: past, present, and future.

Cinematic acculturation is a concept not frequently recognized or utilized in cinema studies or cultural studies. However, it appears to be a notion that mixes cinematic and cultural

¹ Baron, and Akdere. "Economics and Literature: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Approach". Taylor & Francis, 2017.

² Strauss, Valerie. "The Six-Step Sat Cheating Operation in Asia - and How to Stop It." The Washington Post, WP Company, 30 Nov. 2021, www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2014/11/16/the-six-step-sat-cheating-operation-in-asia-and-how-to-stop-it/.

³ Harvey, David. *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2007.

⁴ Di Leo, Jeffrey R. *Catastrophe and Higher Education: Neoliberalism, Theory, and the Future of the Humanities* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

⁵ Brown, Wendy. *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. MIT Press, 2015.

⁶ DVD *Bad Genius*. 2017. Film. Directed by Nattawut Poonpiriya. Thailand.

⁷ Di Leo, Jeffrey R. *Corporate Humanities in Higher Education: Moving Beyond the Neoliberal Academy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), and *Higher Education under Late Capitalism: Identity, Conduct and the Neoliberal Condition* (New York: Palgrave Mac-Millan, 2017).

⁸ Sheldon, Rebekah. *The Child to Come: Life after the Human Catastrophe*. University of Minnesota Press, 2016.

acculturation elements. The process through which a filmmaker or artist incorporates characteristics of many

cultures into their work, frequently resulting in a unique and diverse cinematic experience symbolizing cinematic acculturation. The case of Nattawut Poonpiriya's *Bad Genius* showcases elements of cinematic acculturation that are both an exercise and a celebration of human creativity.

Cinematic acculturation could refer to which individuals or communities adapt to the values, norms, behaviors, or ideas portrayed in cinemas. It can occur through exposure to films from different cultures, leading to changes in how people perceive and interact with the world around them. Imagine that you see *The World of Apu*, a 1958 Indian cinema, "and think it curious that the young married couple never kiss, though they are clearly in love. Later you learn that censorship regulations for Indian films of that time prohibited kissing, so the couple's affection had to be conveyed by other means." (Phillips, William H. *Film: An Introduction*. Macmillan, 2009.)

The Thai Cinema *Bad Genius* showcases elements of cinematic acculturation in several ways:

1. International Themes and Universality⁹ tells the story of Thai high school students who create an elaborate cheating scheme for their entrance exams. The themes of academic pressure, competition, and the desire to succeed are universal and relatable to audiences worldwide. This universality allows the film to connect with viewers from various cultural backgrounds.
2. Visual Style and Cinematography¹⁰ incorporates elements of international cinema in its visual style and cinematography. The use of suspenseful and visually stunning sequences during the cheating episodes draws inspiration from heist films and thrillers, a genre popularized by Hollywood and International cinema. This blending of styles adds depth to the storytelling and engages the audience.
3. Character Diversity¹¹ features a diverse cast of characters, including the protagonist, Lynn, an economically but financially disadvantaged student. The film explores class and social issues, which are relatable and relevant in many cultures. By portraying characters from different backgrounds, the film broadens its appeal and allows audiences to connect with a change of experiences.
4. Educational Systems¹² critiques the pressures and flaws in the educational system, which is a topic that resonates with people worldwide. Many countries share similar concerns about the competitive nature of education and the lengths students may go to succeed academically.
5. Humor and Satire to comment on the education system and the moral dilemmas faced by its characters. This approach to storytelling is influenced by both Thai and international comedic traditions, making the film accessible and enjoyable to the global audience¹³.

Nattawut Poonpiriya's *Bad Genius* exemplifies *cinematic acculturation* by blending elements of Thai culture with international cinematic influences. The film's universal themes, visual style, diverse characters, critique of educational systems, and use of humor contribute to its appeal to audiences from various cultural backgrounds. This approach not only enriches the storytelling but also fosters a sense of shared experience among viewers around the world.

BAD GENIUS

Bad Genius Cinema was released on 3 May 2017 and quickly became the highest-grossing Thai picture of the year, earning over 100 million baht (US\$3 million). Nattawut Poonpiriya directed the cinema *Bad Genius*, which starred Chutimon Chuengcharoensukying as Lynn in her debut film. Inspired by real-life news of students cheating¹⁴ on the SAT¹⁵, the film transplants the heist

⁹ Strauss, Valerie. "Cheating Confirmed on Sat given in Asia." The Washington Post, WP Company, 30 Nov. 2021, www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2014/11/24/cheating-confirmed-on-sat-given-in-asia/.

¹⁰ Rithdee, Kong. "The Genius of Thai Cinema." <https://www.Bangkokpost.Com>, 20 Oct. 2017, www.bangkokpost.com/life/arts-and-entertainment/1345910/the-genius-of-thai-cinema.

¹¹ Asaree Thairakulpanich, Staff Reporter. "Thai Exam-Cheating Thriller Wins Audiences across Asia." Khaosod English, 19 Oct. 2017, www.khaosodenglish.com/news/2017/10/19/thai-exam-cheating-thriller-wins-audiences-across-asia/.

¹² Bhushan, Nyay. "Thai Hit 'Bad Genius' Set for Bollywood Remake." The Hollywood Reporter, The Hollywood Reporter, 25 June 2018, www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/thai-hit-bad-genius-set-bollywood-remake-1122994/.

¹³ Mahavongtrakul, Melalin. "Big Cheats Return to Small Screen." <https://www.Bangkokpost.Com>, 10 Aug. 2020, www.bangkokpost.com/life/social-and-lifestyle/1965643/big-cheats-return-to-small-screen.

¹⁴ Pope, Justin. "Old SAT Exams Get Reused" The Washington Post, WP Company, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/30/AR2007013001173.html.

¹⁵ Renee Dudley; Steve Stecklow; Alexandra Harney; Irene Jay Liu. "As SAT was hit by security breaches, College Board went ahead with tests that had leaked". Reports, Special. web.archive.org/web/20160922053915/https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-

report/college-sat-one/, and Renee Dudley; Steve Stecklow; Alexandra Harney; Irene Jay Liu. "How Asian test-prep companies quickly penetrated the new SAT" Reports, Special. web.archive.org/web/20161018053802/https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/college-sat-two/.

structure to a school exam setting and features themes of class inequality and teenage social issues. Lynn's classmates are played by Chanon Santinatornkul as Bank, Teeradon Supapunpinyo as Pat, Eisaya Hosuwan as Grace, and Pasin Kuansataporn as Tong, while Thaneth Warakulnukroh portrays Lynn's father and Sarinrat Thomas as Headmistress.

The cinema *Bad Genius* begins with Lynn, a top secondary school student living with her father, who is accepted into a prestigious school, earning a scholarship for her academic achievements. There, she became a friend of the good-natured but academically challenged Grace. Lynn begins assisting Grace with her examinations, which attracts Pat, Grace's rich boyfriend, who approaches her and offers her money in exchange for helping him and his friends. Although reluctant, Lynn agrees after devising a system of hand signals based on certain piano pieces and uses them to send answers during exams. Bank, another top student, unwittingly exposes her cheating with the help of Tong. Her father lambasts her, as does the school, which suspends her scholarship and revokes her chance to apply for an international scholarship at the university level.

Lynn returns to cheating when Pat and Grace ask her again to help them with the STIC (SAT)— an international standardized test for university admissions—a scheme that will earn them millions of baht. However, Lynn tells them that she can only do it with the help of Bank, and Bank would never consider such dishonesty with education. Later, though, Bank agrees after missing the scholarship exam. Lynn and Bank will fly to Australia to get a head start on the exams—held globally on the same day—and send back answers for Pat and Grace to distribute to their clients.

Lynn and Bank complete the first sections of the test according to plan, but Bank gets anxious and gets caught. Lynn struggles alone but eventually succeeds. Bank invited Lynn to launch another exam cheating scam, this time with a considerably larger clientele—those taking the national GAT/PAT (GRE¹⁶/GMAT) university entrance exams. Lynn declines, and Bank threatens to expose her; Lynn then informs Bank of her intention to make a formal confession to the STIC organization.

CINEMATIC ACCULTURATION: HIGHER EDUCATION & HOMOECONOMICUS

Cinema today¹⁷ in disparate pieces of older, more established arts is shaped into a smooth, composite whole to make great cinema, something entirely new, powerful, and exciting results— moving images and sounds that follow their own rules of movement, space, and story to reveal a livelier, more passionately intense reflection of the world as we experience it in global times. Multiplex cinemas in major and medium-sized cities across the globe have had a significant impact on the worldwide cinematic economy. The change has been that filmmakers are more willing to take risks with the kinds of films they make; these changes reflect filmmakers' understanding that audiences and aesthetics change over time and that cinema must change to Hatke cinema¹⁸.

The researcher agrees with Di Leo that the future of the humanities is attached to the fate of theory; otherwise, *Higher education under neoliberalism becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe*, exemplifying homo economicus through a few selected cinemas cynically criticizing the higher education of global society due to the shift from theory to studies¹⁹.

1. Class²⁰ is a 1983 American comedy-drama film directed by Lewis John Carlino, which shows the SAT exam also made its big-screen debut. McCarthy plays Jonathan, a working-class kid who has won a scholarship to a prestigious boarding school due to his SAT scores. But, surprise, he cheated.

¹⁶MaheshBuddi/TNN/Updated:Feb9,2023."GRE Fraud Key Accused Sits in US, Conducts Operations via WhatsApp: Hyderabad News - Times of India." The Times of India, TOI, timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/gre-fraud-key-accused-sits-in-us-conducts-ops-via-wa-in-hyderabad/articleshow/97751303.cms?from=mdr. Accessed 30 Sept. 2023.

¹⁷Oumano,Elena. "Cinema Today: A conversation with thirty-nine filmmakers from around the world."Rutgers University Press, 2019.

¹⁸Anjaria,Ulka."Understanding Bollywood: the grammar of Hindi cinema."Routledge,2021.

¹⁹DiLeo,JeffreyR."Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: An Overview."(2023).

²⁰DVD"Class". 1983. Film. Directed by Lewis John Carlino. America.

2. The Perfect Score²¹ is a 2004 American teen comedy-heist film directed by Brian Robbins. The film focuses on six New Jersey high school students whose futures will be jeopardized if they fail the upcoming SAT exam. They conspire to break into a regional office of the Lawrence Township, New Jersey-based Educational Testing Service (ETS), which prepares and distributes the SAT, and steal the answers to the exam so they can all get perfect scores.
3. 3 Idiots²² is a 2009 Indian Hindi film written, edited, and directed by Rajkumar Hirani and produced by Vidhu Vinod Chopra. The film stars Aamir Khan in the lead role. The plot chronicles the relationship of three students in an Indian engineering college and is a satire of the social pressures under the Indian education system.
4. Aarakshan²³ is a 2011 Indian Hindi-language drama film starring Amitabh Bachchan, directed by Prakash Jha; the film is a socio-political drama based on the controversial policy of caste-based reservations in Indian government jobs and educational institutions.
5. Chalk n Duster²⁴ is a 2016 Indian drama film about the commercialization of the Indian private education system, starring Shabana Azmi and directed by Jayant Gilatar. The film talks about teachers' and students' communication and highlights the problem of teachers and students in an educational system that is changing constantly.
6. Why Cheat India²⁵ is a 2019 Indian Hindi-language black comedy crime film written and directed by Soumik Sen. It features Emraan Hashmi and Shreya Dhanwanthary in the lead roles. The film talks about the cheating scandal in the entrance exam of Engineering Courses.
7. 12th Fail²⁶ is an upcoming film set to be released internationally on October 27, 2023. Vidhu Vinod Chopra wrote, directed, and produced the film. 12th Fail star Vikrant Massey is a glimpse into the journey of students who prepare for the prestigious UPSC exams and a tribute to all those who view failures as an opportunity to restart.

The researcher believes that all these cinemas, including *Bad Genius*, are related to the concept of the *circuit of culture*²⁷-producing cinematic acculturation for ages from bell-bottom pants²⁸ of Amitabh Bachchan from Don²⁹ cinema to Salman Khan shirtless extravaganza changing cinema and culture in a constantly changing world. Cinema today aims to understand the social dynamics of global societies according to five fundamental and interlinked dimensions of the *circuit of culture*: representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation. This shift in today's cinema is because humanities are attracted to theories and theories and attached to studies.

A GAME OF CHESS

The cinema *Bad Genius* will be inspired to watch for ages for its realistic portrayal of authentic cheating possible with just a pencil in the SAT exam. It becomes a compelling cinematic journey celebrating the spirit of youth and triumph to cheat and pass standardized tests, minting huge money, putting these students against the system and against the time. The cinema *Bad Genius* has seven parts. The first section begins with a scholarship to a prestigious school for Lynn.

Picture1:BadGenius-Frame:00:04:21



²¹DVD "The Perfect Score".1983.Film. Directed by Brian Robbins. America.

²²DVD "3 Idiots". 2009. Film. Directed by Raj kumar Hirani. India.

²³DVD "Aarakshan". 2011. Film. Directed by Prakash Jha. India.

²⁴DVD "Chalk n Duster". 2016. Film. Directed by Jayant Gilatar. India.

²⁵DVD "Why Cheat India". 2019. Film. Directed by Soumik Sen. India.

²⁶ <https://www.outlookindia.com/art-entertainment/-12th-fail-teaser-vidhu-vinod-chopra-vikrant-massey-s-film-is-about-upsc-students-lives-and-struggles-news-309549>, and <https://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/movies/vidhu-vinod-chopras-12th-fail-starring-vikrant-massey-locks-release-date/article67180230.ece>

²⁷DuGay, Paul, et al. "Doing cultural studies: The story of the Sony Walkman". Sage, 2013.

²⁸Freebirds. "Bell-Bottom Pants from Sailors to a 2-Decade Long Fashion Statement." Freebirds, www.freebirds.co/story/ec15e6ffb966/. Accessed 29 Sept. 2023.

²⁹DVD "Don". 1978. Film. Directed by Chandra Barot. India.

³⁰The Student. "What Is GPA?" 12 Sept. 2023, www.timeshighereducation.com/student/advice/what-gpa.

³¹Carron, L. Peter. "Morse code: the essential language". No. 69. American Radio Relay League (ARRL), 1991.

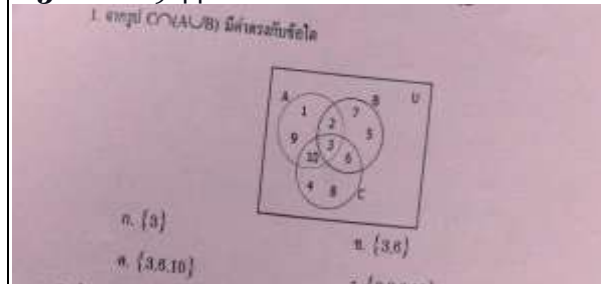
Picture 1 will make you understand why the researcher believes that higher education under neoliberalism is an educational catastrophe depicting homo economicus. The school headmistress asks Lynn do you want to study here? Lynn replied I want to learn here, but my old school is more suitable for me. If I move here, my Dad will pay 150,000 baht per year. The headmistress asks how is it 150,000. One semester is only 60,000, so it comes up to 120,000. Correct. However, my Dad taught at my old school, hence, I can go with him to school every morning. If I study here, I'd have to ride the skytrain and motor taxis from the station to my house, which cost 80 baht a day for 170 days. It costs around 13,600 baht each year. There is also lunch, at my old school it only costs 20 baht for two sides with rice. Here it's 35 baht. I'll also have to buy new school supplies and uniforms. I think, all in all, 150,000 baht a year, and it might not be worth it. The headmistress frees the fees and lunch for a genius like Lynn depicting homo economicus. "Homo economicus is self-made and thus entirely responsible for his or her fortunes ... and misfortunes." (Fleming, Peter. Dark Academia: How Universities Die. Pluto Press, 2021.)

The second part starts with assisting Grace in achieving a perfect GPA³⁰ in school exams and helping other friends in school examinations through the Morse code³¹ of piano lessons.

P-2-F: 00:09:38



P-3-F: 00:09:44



P-4-F: 00:21:51



P-5-F: 00:22:33



Pictures 2,3,4 and 5 exemplify that once a homo economicus, always a homo economicus. Lynn noticed the exam question paper and instantly realized it was the same as Grace's tuition sheet. Lynn agreed to assist Grace by writing the answer in the eraser, which helped Grace achieve a 3.87 GPA on the exam. Grace's affluent and ostentatious boyfriend Pat invited Lynn to a party and offered to pay 3000 baht per subject, including five Pat friends. It becomes 13 subjects per semester multiplied by 3000, which becomes 39000 baht per student and 234000 baht per semester for six students. Lynn was not interested in doing all this cheating, but Pat said something about the tea money or the maintenance fees, which shocked Lynn. Lynn was startled to learn that his father paid 200,000 baht for new student fees despite receiving the scholarship, which shattered Lynn's heart and convinced her that the school had cheated her. Lynn swiftly deciphered the Morse code in the piano lesson through which she would pass the solution to his friends in the exam. Lynn explains that the question paper will have four alternatives: A, B, C, and D. Answer A will start with the smallest finger and end with the thumb. Answer B is (fingers) 4,3,2,1,3 repeated twice. Answer C is 3,2,1,5,2 repeated twice, and Answer D is 2,1,5,4,1 repeated twice. Lynn planned everything, and everyone passed as

expected, which blossomed Lynn's cheating plans, and more students joined and benefitted from these cheating scams, making Lynn rich, depicting homo economicus. "In neoliberal reason and in domains governed by it, we are only and everywhere homo oeconomicus, which itself has a historically specific form. Far from Adam Smith's creature propelled by the natural urge to *truck, barter, and exchange*, today's homo oeconomicus is an intensely constructed and governed bit of human capital tasked with improving and leveraging its competitive positioning and with enhancing its (monetary and nonmonetary) portfolio value across all of its endeavors and venues." (Brown, Wendy. *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. MIT Press, 2015.)

Lynn is caught in the third part by Bank's cheating allegations with the help of Tong, and the school headmistress denies her a fully funded foreign scholarship test.



Pictures 6,7,8,9,10, and 11 introduce Bank, another genius who has received a scholarship from the school, another futuristic homo economicus, and explains the Morse code passing over to different students in a large hall. The school declared that the Singapore Embassy will grant scholarships to Thai students only next year for scholarship students. There are no strings connected. It is a complete scholarship, but there is a catch: the school can only send one student. The battle between homo economicus and futuristic homo economicus took a drastic change just before the Final examination of Grade-11. The school has two sets of papers for the final exam. Tong seeks assistance from Bank since the Morse code of the piano instruction was tough, launching this cheating claim, and Lynn is apprehended because she has scribbled names on the rough pages of both sets of paper. The school did not expel Lynn, but she was banned from taking the Singapore Scholarship test. "When you live in someone else's utopia, all you have is revenge." (Haiven, Max. "Revenge Capitalism: The Ghosts of Empire, the Demons of Capital, and the Settling of Unpayable Debts."(2020).)

The fourth portion begins with thoughts about helping Grace and Pat in the SAT exam. The fifth part starts with how to crack the SAT exam realistically. The sixth section begins with the addition of Bank and preparation for the SAT exam. The seventh section arrived with a successful theft and confession. The 4, 5, 6, and 7th sections are attached to the chronotope theory. "In his study of chronotopes, Bakhtin implicitly describes the specific ways in which this influence functions. His analysis of the role of concepts of time in action-space chronotopes is twofold, delineating both the influence of the worldview's concept of time and that of the plot-space's concept of time." (Keunen, Bart. *Time and Imagination: Chronotopes in Western Narrative Culture*. Northwestern University Press, 2011.)

P-12-F: 00:53:24



P-13-F: 00:58:39



P-14-F: 01:00:54



P-15-F: 01:01:33



P-16-F: 01:01:47



P-17-F: 01:02:01



P-18-F: 01:06:19



P-19-F: 01:07:51



P-20-F: 01:21:05



P-21-F: 01:26:32



P-22-F: 01:44:01



P-23-F: 02:03:53



Pictures 12 to 23 explain the complexities of the human realities of today's higher education and highlight critical aspects of the economy by connecting characters to their economic environment, which uses moneymaking choices and events to narrate social behavior, individual desires, and even non-economic decisions.

Grade 12 begins with fresh academic concerns for Grace and Pat after the cheating scam is exposed, so they

call Lynn to a meeting where Grace offers 6,00,000 baht for passing the STIC exam, as money is always a winning proposition for everyone. Lynn read the SAT exam patterns from Grace's book but was unable to understand how she would pass the answers to Grace and Pat because the SAT exam occurs on the same day around the world, so she wrote a note and returned the book in the reception but ironically an American tourist phone rang and in the conversation with his young daughter Lynn realized the time difference between one country to another country and quickly realized that if she goes to Sydney(Australia) to give the exam, she has a chance of passing the answer to Grace and Pat because Australia is four hours ahead of Thailand which realistically allows Lynn to cheat in the SAT exam. "This actor, *homo economicus*, is a completely rational actor who enters into transactions solely to maximize his economic well-being." (Fineman, Martha, and Terence Dougherty, eds. *Feminism confronts homo economicus: gender, law, and society*. Cornell University Press, 2018.)

Lynn's SAT cheating scheme was straightforward and profitable. Lynn told Grace and Pat that she needs at least 30 clients, each paying 2,50,000 baht, for a total of 7,500,000 baht, and that she does not require any scholarship to attend Boston University. Clients were never an issue, but how the clients would get the response since you could only bring a pencil, rubber, hall ticket, and passport in the SAT exam. Lynn will memorize the solution and WhatsApp it to Grace and Pat during the test break using the hidden covert phone in the restroom, and Grace and Pat will distribute the pencil with the answer encoded in the barcode. The SAT exam has four sections. Section 1 has 52 Questions, Section 2 has 44 Questions, Section 3 has 16 Questions, and Section 4 has 30 Questions. Every client will receive a pencil with a barcode stuck to it. The different widths of the barcode will represent the answer choices starting from left to right. The thickest is A, then B, C, and D. The four pencils will mean the answer for the four sections. The number next to the barcode is for grid-in questions, and the number next to grid-in questions will be the number for different sections. This cheating scheme is only conceivable with the addition of Bank because 142 questions cannot be memorized by Lynn alone. Pat paid money on the eve of the scholarship test to beat Bank hard and throw Bank in landfills, causing him to miss the International scholarship exam. "From the angle of *homo oeconomicus*, there is no fundamental difference between murder and a parking offence." (Lemke, Thomas. "The birth of bio-politics: Michel Foucault's lecture at the Collège de France on neo-liberal governmentality." *Economy and Society* 30.2 (2001): 190-207.)

Bank had little option but to comply with Lynn's scheme of cheating on the SAT exam after missing the scholarship exam. Bank agrees to 20,00,000 baht, 10,00,000 baht for assisting in the exam, and 100,000 baht for being severely assaulted. The college board strengthened security protocols for the SAT exam because of leaked question papers. Bank will deliver the first 26 questions, and Lynn will send the remaining 26 questions, completing Section 1 of the SAT exam. Grace and Pat, on the other hand, created the barcode with the proper responses after obtaining the solution. Lynn and Bank begin Sections 2 and 3 again, but during the break, Bank sends his quarter of the solution to Grace and Pat before being caught, and Lynn is unable to send the answer because someone else is in the toilet. Lynn is the only one who returns to the exam and completes Section 4 and memorizes 60 answers of Sections 2, 3, and 4 in Morse's code of piano lesson, after which she purposely vomits and sends the solution back to Grace and Pat. Lynn struggles to memorize the final section herself but finally pulls through, and their exam cheating scheme is a great success. Bank invites Lynn to start another exam cheating scheme, this time with a much bigger client base—those taking the national GAT/PAT (GRE/GMAT) university entrance exams. When she turns him down, Bank threatens to expose; Lynn then informs Bank that she has decided to come clean by filing a formal confession to the SAT organization, thus ending the cinema and the careers of both Lynn and Bank.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the higher education & homo economicus imagery scattered throughout the movie *Bad Genius* lends itself to numerous and compelling interpretations. It may exemplify the terrified state of students from higher education under neoliberalism. Furthermore, the contrast between many cheating strategies and Lynn's genius epitomizes the struggle between the community of higher education and homo economicus, the exam cheating afflicting the excellent students-Bank. Given that Thailand & Australia are characterized as globalized jungles, the higher education & homo economicus references might underline its wilderness, despite its evolution and cutting-edge technology. Not to add that homo economicus can continue to dwell in Thailand without the risk of being caught, demonstrating a steadiness that students like Bank, whose career is transient and constantly threatened by Pat and Lynn. In addition to the situation of higher education and the description of the city, higher education & homo economicus imagery plays a pivotal role at the narrative level by influencing important scenes and acting as a revealing power that shows unexpected meanings or clarifies situations. In light of all these thought-provoking interpretations, *Bad Genius* creatively displays a unique and multi-layered use of higher education & homo economicus imagery in the cinema.

Higher education & homo economicus references and their varied interpretations in *Bad Genius* throw new insights into research, which display interesting higher education & homo economicus metaphors. The

analysis of Bad Genius contributes to the discipline of cinema, higher education & homo economicus since they recognize human evolution as a form of homo sapiens, albeit unique. As a matter of fact, the cinema employs several higher education & homo economicus metaphors and, more importantly, applies them to globalized times with a surprising variety of aims, which the researcher has tried to bring to the foreground in this paper.

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