

القيود الأيديولوجية والرؤى اليطوباوية في فيلم تيد بوست *أخبر الأسبرطيين* ماحدث

**Ideological Restrictions and Utopian Visions in Ted Post's *Go Tell the Spartans***

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## **Abstract**

*Go Tell the Spartans* (1978) is one of the first post-Vietnam War movies narrating the end of the French presence in Vietnam and the early involvement of the United States there. It depicts the United States' bourgeois ideology after WWII and its reactions against the spread of communism. This article analyzes the conflict between ideological restrictions and utopian visions in Ted Post's movie *Go Tell the Spartans* as a literary text more than as a cinematic production. At the ideological level, this article shows that the movie sustains the United States' exceptionalism or heroism and reinforces the stereotypical representation of the Vietnamese within the

context of the Other. Nevertheless, at the utopian level, this article highlights the United States' military advisors' rejection of Vietnam War and their attempt to establish a solidarity with Vietnamese as human beings beyond the United States' othering of them as "enemy." Significantly, this article mainly adapts Paul Ricoeur's dialectical analysis of ideology and utopia as the main literary theory. Thus, it discusses ideological constraints and utopian visions according to Ricoeur's concept of the ideology as a source of distortion and legitimization, and a utopia within the concept of critique and rupture more than futuristic visions.

Key Words: Utopia, ideology, Vitenam War, American movies and culture, Paul Ricoeur.

#### الخلاصة

**أخبر الأسبرطيين ما حدث** هو واحد من أوائل الأفلام الأمريكية التي انتجت ما بعد حرب فيتنام. إذ يتتبع الفيلم نهاية الوجود الفرنسي في فيتنام والوجود المبكر للولايات المتحدة الأمريكية هناك ثم خسارتها لهذه الحرب. سيقوم هذا البحث على تحليل هذا الفلم كنص أدبي أكثر من نص أو إنتاج سينمائي من جهة الأيدولوجية وجهة اليطوباوية كاتجاهين مختلفتين. فالتحليل الأيدولوجي للفلم سيناقش كيف حاول الفلم أن يحافظ على الأيدولوجية البرجوازية الأمريكية واستعراض شجاعة واستثنائية مستشاري الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، وتكرار النظرة الأمريكية للفيتناميين ضمن نطاق الاخر أو "كاعداء". أما التحليل اليطوباوية في البحث سيبين مدى استياء المستشارين والجنود الأمريكيين تجاه هذه حرب ومعارضتهم لها من خلال ممارسات ونشاطات متعددة مثل ارسال معلومات مضللة عن انتشار المقاتلين الفيتناميين المعارضين للوجود الأمريكي في فيتنام واعدادهم الحقيقة، وتناول الجنود والمستشارين للمخدرات لنسيان مخاوف القتل وويلات الحرب، ومحاولة التضامن مع المدنيين الفيتناميين خارج التعريف الأمريكي الامبريالي والبرجوازي المعادي لهم. وهكذا سيتبنى البحث اراء الفيلسوف پول ريكو ونظريته في الأيدولوجيا واليطوبيا كنظرية أدبية أساسية في هذا البحث.

يوتوبيا، الأيدولوجيا، حرب فيتنام، الادب الأمريكي، پول ريكو

## Ideological Restrictions and Utopian Visions in Ted Post's

### *Go Tell the Spartans*

#### 1. Introduction

*Go Tell the Spartans* (1978) is an anti-war movie and narrates some incidents from the Vietnam War. The movie was based on Daniel Ford's *Incident at Muc Wa* and produced in what was called the period of the "transition to the peaceful time 1974–1977." It portrays the United States' sending of many American military advisors to Vietnam to train the South Vietnamese how to confront the Vietcong and the spread of communism in Asia. The movie was directed by Ted Post in 1978. The screenplay was written by Hollywood screenwriter [Wendell Mayes](#) and produced by Avco Embassy pictures and United Artists.

*Go Tell the Spartans* shows a group of American military advisors arriving to Vietnam before the United States' large involvement in Vietnam war. The advisors find themselves entrapped into in a helpless struggle against the Viet Cong. They are ambushed in their camp which is very close to the place of a massacre of French soldiers during the First Indochina War which took place earlier. The outpost is heavily attacked and just one American advisor survived. According to Kate Buford (2013) the movie was produced between October and November of 1977 "with a shrinking budget of \$1.5 million on one square mile of Valencia hillside brush off Interstate 5 in Los Angeles. Keeping the Magic Mountain theme park roller coaster out of the camera frame was an important concern" (p. 290). However, this article discusses *Go tell the Spartans* as a literay text rather than as a cinematic artifact.

This article discusses the ideological restrictions and utopian visions in *Go Tell the Spartans*. It argues that even though *Go Tell the Spartans* is considered an anti-

Vietnam War movie, at the ideological level, the movie supports this war and the bourgeois ideology of the United States indirectly. The movie sustains American exceptionalism and heroism, represents the United States as the global guardian of human rights, and reinforces the stereotypical representation of the Vietnamese as Other. The movie also justifies the United States' loss of the Vietnam War, and calls for the wide military expansion in the South Vietnam. However, at the utopian level, *Go Tell the Spartans* breaks the ideological constraints and presents contradictions within the bourgeois ideology of the United States. It critiques the United States' quick militarism of South Vietnam after sending military advisors there and condemns its refusal to get lessons from the French defeat in Vietnam. Furthermore, the movie depicts American advisors' rejections of this war by revealing their abuse of drugs, committing suicide, and sending fake information about the presence of the Vietcong around a village called Muc Wu in the South Vietnam. *Go Tell the Spartans* also produces utopian visions by showing the military advisors' trying to establish a solidarity with all Vietnamese as human beings beyond the United States' stereotypical divisions of them on the basis of their loyalties to bourgeois ideology. To explain these concepts further in *Go tell the Spartans*, this article will adopt the dialectical analysis of ideology and utopia as the main literary theory.

The dialectical concept of utopia and ideology was discussed by many important literary scholars, such as the Hungarian scholar Karl Mannheim, the French scholar Paul Ricoeur, the German scholar Ernest Bloch, and recently the American scholar Fredric Jameson. In *Ideology and Utopia*, Mannheim (1954) represents ideology and utopia as two struggling concepts. He states that "ideology reflects the one discovery which emerged from political conflict, namely, that ruling groups can in their thinking become so intensively interest-bound to a situation that they are simply no longer able to see certain facts which would undermine their sense of domination"(p.40). However, Mannheim defines a utopia as an opposite concept and relates it to

marginalized groups who are “ interested in the destruction and transformation of a given condition of society that they unwittingly see only those elements in the situation which tend to negate it. ... They are not at all concerned with what really exists; rather in their thinking they already seek to change the situation that exists” (p. 40).

Clearly, Mannhain relates the major concepts in ideology, specially social ideology to the ruling class and the concept of a utopia to the ideas and visions which are completely opposite to the social ideology. The social ideology for Mannhain attempts to support the status quo and show the dominant ideas as always prevailing ideas hiding any notions or perspectives which would attempt to weaken or trouble the dominant ideology. However, the utopian visions would usually critique the dominant ideology and search for alternatives.

Likewise, Paul Ricoeur views the concept of ideology and utopia equally in his book *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (1976a) and his article “Ideology and Utopia as Cultural Imagination” (1976b) Being a Marxist thinker, Ricoeur was greatly influenced by Karl Marx’s consideration of ideology as a camera or the inverted image of camera. Ricoeur (1976a) states that “ this imagery, the paradigm of an inverted image of reality, is very important in situating our first concept of ideology. Ideology’s first function is its production of an inverted image”(p. 4). In other words, Ricoeur believes that ideology attempts to make an upside down image of status quo. Ideology “ appears as a general device by which the process of the real life is obscured” (Ricoeur, 1976a, p. 5). That said, obscuring and inverting reality are two important aspects of ideology in Ricoeur’s perspectives and these aspects will be used in this article to show how *Go tell the Spartans* tries to obscure and invert the image of American advisors’ horrible situations in Vietnam during the war. The utopian vision is another important aspect in Ricoeur’s dialectical concept. Ricoeur

(1976b) defines a utopia as a vision “capable of shattering a given order [and it] is already the shadow of an alternative order that could be opposed to the given order” (p. 24). Accordingly, a utopia for Ricour is a vision of shattering and critique rather than a fantastical vision.

Significantly, the notion of a utopia or a utopian vision is no longer reduced to Thomas More’s ideas or visions in *Utopia* (1516) or to an imaginative place and futuristic dreams or has an escapist feature. For many recent scholars, a utopian thinking should focus on how to challenge or break the status quo instead of escaping it. For many scholars, a utopian thinking should focus on envisioning a better life on a well known and existed place more than an imaginative place or an unknown planet which is located nowhere. For example, Fredric Jameson suggests that “ Utopians have to concentrate not on the visions of future happiness...Utopian thinking must first involve the radical therapy for dystopia, its radical treatment and cure; only then can it begin to spin out its own impossible pipedreams”( as cited in Noori, 2020, p. 28).

That said, this article mainly adapts Ricoeur’s views about a utopia which attempts to challenge the status quo and disempower the prevailing ideas more than the traditional visions of a utopia.

## **2. *Go Tell the Spartans*: Ideological Restrictions**

*Go Tell the Spartans* reinforces American exceptionalism and heroism. The movie highlights the imagined superiority of the American military advisors. It represents the advisors within Major Asa Barker’s (Burt Lancaster) unit as more valiant than the French in decoding the strategies of the Vietcong and in understanding their spread in Vietnam. They are seen planning and enacting quickly as soon as they arrive Muc

Wa and refuse to repeat the French mistakes there and get defeated. General Harnitz (Dolph Sweet) tells Barker that “Now, that’s [the French defeat] not gonna happen to the U.S. army, Asa” (0: 16:51). The movie reveals a bourgeois ideological constraint in highlighting these advisors’ superiority in training and mobilizing the South Vietnamese soldiers against the Vietcong. Martin M. Winkler asserts that the movie highlights idealism in American Army. For example, the lieutenant states that “ I feel that if my country is at war its my duty to fight for it” (0:7:16). Later on, this lieutenant also tells the Vietnamese under his command “ we will establish a fortress for liberty and justice” (0:22:30). He believes in spreading American justice and liberty.

Furthermore, the movie stresses the resoluteness of American advisors. It shows them challenging the Vietcong in Muc Wa and building their outpost next to the graveyard of three hundred French soldiers who were murdered by the Vietcong. At the same time, these advisors continue building their outpost despite their expectations of being attacked by the Vietcong at any moment. Thus, the movie supports superiority of the United States’ Army in fighting and constructing outposts. That said, these scenes produce ideological restrictions in the movie. They produce what Ricour calls “an inverted image” of American advisors horrible situations and activities in Muc Wa and hide their real panics there. (p.4)

The film *Go tell Spartans* reaffirms the United States generosity and commitment for other nations as another ideological constraints. The advising members in General Barker’s unit are seen as loyal to their country, and having a high commitment to help and sacrifice for other nations. They refuse to leave the South Vietnamese on the crossroad to fight the Vietcong alone. They do not give South Vietnamese soldiers abstract lessons in advising only but they also fight against the Vietcong at the frontlines with them. In this sense, the movie repeats the constraint of bourgeois

ideology. It represents the United State as a benevolent power more than an imperialist one and displays the United States as a boundlessly generous country with unlimited giving. It exhibits the United States as usually helping the nations in need and giving them whatever they need unrequitedly. Major Baker tells Colonel Minh (Clyde Kusatsu) that “In the whole history of the United States, they have never asked for the return of anything be it guns, money, boats or howitzers shells. They wouldn’t know how to ask for the return of anything ” (01:12:32). The movie highlights the bourgeois ideology of the United States and represents the United States as a country loyal to its commitment.

*Go Tell the Spartans* reinforces the ideological representation of the Vietnamese as the Other. It portrays them as barbarous and inhuman. Seargent Oleonoskwi (John Goldsmith) warns Lieutenant Hamilton (Joe Unger) by stating that the Vietcong can “come over the walls like a forest fire” and “the dinks [ the Vietcong] don’t feel any pain. The barbwire makes them itch a little” (0:40:30). The movie attributes the defeat of Major Barker’s unit in Vietnam to the Vietcong’s elusiveness and use of untraditional tactics in fighting. It contrasts the kind treatment of the civilians by Major Barker’s unit and their adherence to the traditional laws of militarism with the Vietcong’s adaptation of barbarous and irregular military rules, such as guerrilla tactics and civilian recruitment. Some advisors in Major Barker’s unit treat a group of women, children, and elders kindly. They allow them to live in their outpost and they are unaware of the fact that these civilians are the Vietcong’s infiltrators. George C. Herring mentions that North Vietnam established many guerrilla units. Most of these units’ members were civilians. As a result, the United States’ soldiers found it difficult to distinguish their proponents from their opponents (as cited in Woodman, 2003, p.47). Accordingly, *Go Tell the Spartans* justifies the American soldiers’ killing of any civilian that they suspect to being a member in the Vietcong. The movie enhances the bourgeois ideology’s depiction of Americans as



“good guys” and the Vietcong as “bad guys” or “uncivilized Other”. Susan Hayward (2000) indicates that uncivilized othering became an important stereotyped theme produced and reproduced in Vietnam War movies , and *Go tell the Spartans* is not exception. It is a technique focused on the ill characterization of “the enemy” (as cited in Woodman, 2003, p.45).

Equally important, Brian J. Woodman (2003) reports that like other movies of Vietnam War, *Go tell Spartants* represents Vietnamese in some scenes as wild people. It shows them staying in the shadow for a while and stabbing the United States’ soldiers on backs wildly. Remarkably, the movie also depicts Vietcong’s attacking American soldiers with primitive weapons such as swords and knives. (pp. 45–46) Thus, the movie maintains a racist approach in representing the Other. In fact, these situations produce another ideological constraints in *Go tell the Spartans*. According to Ricouer (1976b), “ideology would be the system of justification capable of filling up the gap of political overvalue” (p.22). This is exactly what happens in the movie. It justifies American advisors’ defeat in Vietnam as it attributes it to American’s adherence to “honorable” military rules and the Vietcong’s utilization of barbarous tactics in fighting and civilian recruitment.

*Go Tell the Spartans* has another ideological constraint in legitimizing the United States’ military intervention in Vietnam. It depicts the military intervention in Vietnam as a necessity for South Vietnamese security and for American integrity. It exhibits the South Vietnamese as unorganized fighters. In this sense, the movie points out the idea of what was called the “yellow peril.” Gina Marchetti (1993) asserts that the yellow peril “ contributed to the notion that all nonwhite people are by nature physically and intellectually inferior, morally suspect, heathen, licentious, disease-ridden, feral, violent, uncivilized, infantile, and the need of the guidance of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants” (as cited in Woodman, 2003, p.45).

At the same time, *Go tell the Spartans* depicts the Vietnamese as ignorant and unable to plan any military defense or attack without American advisors' assistant. It represents the Vietnamese inside the headquarter of American advisors in Mac Wu as a group of villagers and primitive farmers motivated for fighting the Vietcong just by American advisors. They do not know how to avoid a Vietcong's ambush and need the American advisors badly to destroy the Vietcong's ambush. Moreover, the movie also depicts the South Vietnamese soldiers as unable to confront the Vietcong at the front line without American advisors' plans. As noted, these events legitimize the United States' military intervention in the South Vietnam, and "*legitimization*" for Ricoeur, in Langdrige's (2006) perspective, is another function of ideology as it tries to legitimize and universalize all activities and values of a dominant ideology (p. 653).

Ultimately, *Go Tell the Spartans* attributes the brutal slaughtering of Barker's unit, at the end of the movie, to the delay of the military support rather than to the fragility in advisors' resistance or their miscomprehending of the circumstances around them. In other words, the movie relates the slaughtering of American advisors to the lack of military support and having insufficient numbers of soldiers. The movie upholds the necessity of increasing the advisory members in Vietnam rather than their decrease. Significantly, the tragic end of the movie, which is very brutal and violent does not propose the end of American involvement in Vietnam. On the contrary, it shows the wide spread of communism and calls for revenge or for further involvement in South Vietnam to preserve American integrity since the violence in a movie, in Francis Coppola's words, always "breeds violence. If you put a lot of it on the screen, it makes people lust for violence" (as cited in Suid , 2002, p. 343). Considering all circumstances, the movie points out the bourgeois ideology's constraints in two ways. First, it shows the impotency of South Vietnamese soldiers to defend themselves without American military support. Second, it highlights the rise of the Vietcong's iniquity and the crisis of American integrity in South Vietnam. Significantly, ideological

constraints are not the only aspects in *Go Tell the Spartans*. The movie has many scenes which alternatively reveal utopian visions.

### 3. *Go Tell the Spartans*: Utopian Visions

*Go Tell the Spartans* produces many utopian visions trying to break the constraints of American bourgeois ideology. The utopian visions critique the status quo in American bourgeoisie ideology and envision alternatives to it. The movie refers to a state of dissent between American administration and American Army. It also reveals utopian visions in the practices and plans of some of American advisors in Vietnam. For example, General Barker and his companions refuse the American military engagements in Vietnam. They are seen getting addicted to drugs and committing suicide. At the same time, some advisors attempt to build a social relationship with all of the Vietnamese as human beings and beyond the ideological categorization of them as South or North Vietnamese. Thus, the American advisors' practices embody utopian visions because the advisors struggle to create new spaces of liberty, and to achieve a change in the United States' imperialistic presence in Asia.

*Go Tell the Spartans* uncovers a state of hidden schism in American bourgeois ideology. It mirrors a state of ambivalence between the United States Army and American administration through introducing the military advisors in Barker's unit as unprepared and hesitant to fight in Vietnam. Robert Buzzanco (2007) asserts that there were a few military advisors who recommended military involvement in Vietnam but the majority of them warned the American administration of the difficulties of participating in any land fighting in South Vietnam. For instance, Buzzanco mentions that the military advisors such as Dwight Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur stated that "we should not get engaged in a land battle in the continent of Asia" (as cited in Buzzanco, 2007, p. 198 ). Similarly, J. Lawton Collins reported that he does not

know any “single senior commander that was in favor of fighting on the land mass of Asia” (as cited in Buzzanco, 2007, p.198). Despite these warnings and recommendations, the American administration involved there.

Furthermore, the movie depicts the era between 1954–1964 as a disastrous transformation in Vietnam War. The bourgeois ideology transformed the role of the American military from the level of advising to the level of fighting and being involved. The title of the movie *Go tell the Spartans* is not an accident. It was engraved at the gate of a graveyard of the French soldiers who were killed there before the Americans. It is an epitaph taken from the Greek poet Simonides’ epitaph “ *Go Tell the Spartans*, stranger passing by, that here, obedient to their laws, we lie”. (0: 38:40) Corporal Courcay explains this epitaph stating that “ I think [the epitaph] refers to the battle of Thermopylae, where the three hundred Spartans died trying to hold pass– if you remember your Greek history, sir” (0: 38:29) In other words, the title refers to the battle of Thermopylae which took place in 480 B.C. Thus, the movie’s title also has a utopian vision. Eventhough it was taken from a war happened in the past, it envisons the future state of American soldiers in Vietnam to be similar to Spartans futue in the battle of Thermopylae. Martin Winkler (2000) thinks that all audience of this movie who studied the Greek history will realize the reason behind this connection between the Vietnam War and the battle of Thermopylae. At the same time, Winkler reports that the real meaning of “Go tell the Spartans” is “ Go tell the Americans” (pp. 202–204). The movie criticizes American bourgeois ideology during this era. Instead of establishing a strong national army and a successful national government in South Vietnam, the movie shows that the United States’ intervention in Vietnam led to the Vietcong getting stronger and American advisors suffering the defeats like the Greek Spartans. In brief, the movie could successfully narrate the epitaph of an entire nation and its involvement in Vietnam.

General Barker is exhausted with American wars and American bourgeois ideology. He participated in WWII and the Korean War before the Vietnam War. He is not convinced by American bourgeois ideology and its projects in these wars. There are utopian impulses in his reactions against the Vietnam War. He challenges American military in many situations to create spaces of liberty. Once, he challenges military laws by sending fake information about the presence of the Vietcong in Muc Wa. He did not report any correct news about the growth of communism and the gradual spread of Vietcongs in Vietnam. He also risks his future in the military by having a sexual affair with his General's wife. Through the last action, Barker does not aim to fulfil a sexual desire as much as he intends to do something political and to bring forth the scandals within the bourgeois ideology. Thus, Barker's reactions have utopian impulses because they aim at creating spaces of freedom and resistance opposing the continuation of the bourgeois ideology and its plans in Vietnam. The aforementioned situation in *Go tell the Spartans* embodies a vision toward utopia, especially within Ricoeur's definition of a utopia which is a challenge to 'what is' and a challenge to the status quo. (Landgridge, 2006, p. 651).

Similarly, Sergeant Olenowski (Jonathan Goldsmith) is another advisor who is not inclined to participate in Vietnam. Clearly, he feels guilty and remorseful for losing three members under his command before arriving in Muc Wa and more frustrated after having one of his companions killed by the Vietcong in Muc Wa. He is exhausted of wars and feels afraid of being killed by the Vietcong. He realizes that there is no difference between the Korean War and the United States' sending of advisors to South Vietnam. He predicts that this process is the beginning of a new war in Asia and wants to stop it. As a result, he commits suicide at the end of the movie. His suicide produces visions toward a utopian in the sense that it critiques the bourgeois ideology, though radically, and attempts to change it. In other words, Olenowski's suicide is a ruthless and a radical protest against American

involvement in Vietnam. Oleonowski's reaction has a utopian vision or what Ricour would call "eccentric and erratic " function of a utopia because it shatters the bourgeois ideology and looks for alternative social system at any cost. This scene also produces an eccentric function of a utopia because it accuses the United States' administration, through this fictional suicide, of being responsible for many actual suicides in the United States which happened as an action of protest to Vietnam War. For example, Norman Morrison and Aprotested protested radically against American involvement in Vietnam at its earlier stages in 1965 through self-immolation.

Corporal Abraham Lincoln (Dennis Howard) is a combat medic and a drug addict. He's, in Barker's words, "caved" because of the war. He takes drugs as a way to escape from the horror and fear of the war. His abuse of drugs embodies a utopian vision. It gives Corporal Abraham Lincoln an alternative chance to condemn and criticize the bourgeois ideology freely without any punishment. It gives him different moments to forget the horrors and fears of the war. Furthermore, his appropriation of the President Abraham Lincoln's name and singing the Gettysburg's Address "Four Score and Seven years ago" is not an accident. Corporal Abraham Lincoln reveals the differences between the President Lincoln's policy which ended slavery and American Civil War, and the policy of the United States administrations during the Vietnam War which changed the United States to an imperialist power.

Corporal Stephen Courcey (Craig Wasson) is a draftee and a demolitions expert. His kind treatment of the Vietcong's infiltrators embodies a utopian vision in *Go Tell the Spartans*. He is the first American advisor who talked with Vietnamese and offered them a chocolate despite Oleonowski and Cowboy (Evan C. Kim), the South Vietnamese translator, defining them as communists. Courcey could also convince Lieutenant Hamilton (Joe Unger) to have some Vietnamese in the American outpost.

Together, these two advisors refuse to yield to the ideological categorization of these Vietnamese as communists and treat them as human beings. Moreover, these advisors contradict the alienation of American advisors and motivate other advisors to reconcile with all. Later on, Courcey ignores Barker's order of evacuating the American wounded advisors only and leaving the South Vietnamese wounded soldiers. He decides to stay with them. Hence, Courcey's reactions have utopian impulse because they aim to establish a community beyond a national priority and identity. He wants to unify all of the fighting sides together and establish a coexistence between them. His survival of the massacre at the end of the movie sums up the United States' failure not only in fighting the communists but also in reconciling with them. Thus, this scene signals another utopian vision in the movie. It reveals the necessity of replacing enmity between American advisors and Vietnamese or even the Vietcong with amity.

The advisors' aforementioned actions and reactions have significant utopian visions. For Fredric Jameson (2005) any "[c]rime, war ... drugs, violence, boredom [...] sexism, racism – all can be diagnosed as so many results of a society unable to accommodate the productiveness of all of its citizens. At this point, then, Utopian circularity becomes both a political vision and program, and a critical and diagnostic instrument" (pp.147–8). These advisors' different practices and activities have visions toward a particular utopia because they critique the bourgeois ideology and attempt to produce an alternative political visions. They ask the viewers to scrutinize the real reasons behind the advisors' reactions. The movie depicts their reactions as shocking and dreadful ones. The advisors' intend to weaken the United States engagement in this war and projects a program beyond romanticizing the United States' power and exceptionalism. Thus, the American advisors target the bourgeois ideology and intend to change it immediately through nonmilitary activities rather than military ones since the United States' military activities threaten the establishment of any perfect society

or a stable region in the future. *Go tell the Spartans* critiques the United States, envisions anmity and solidarity between American advisors and Vietnemes as alternative visions against enmity and ideological categorizations of Vietnamese.

## Conclusion

As noted, this article analyzes the utopian visions and ideological constrains in *Go tell the Spartans* according to, mainly, Ricoeur's dialectical approach of a utopian and ideological analysis. Ricour, according to Lindgedger believes that ideology usually attempts to distort reality and legitimize the values of a prevailing ideology. However, a utopia will always challenge the prevailing ideology and envisions an alternative status quo. (*Lectures on ideology and utopia*, p. 653-54). *Go Tell the Spartans* is an anti war movie, it supports American bourgeois ideology and its ideological constraints indirectly. The movie sustains American military desires in Vietnam. It gives the advisors in Barker's unit more superiority than the French advisors especially in fighting the Vietcong and in guiding the South Vietnamese. The movie disorts the fact that the United States' advisors were in a hostile land and most of them get killed by the Vietcong. At the same time, the movie ignores the United States' imperialistic adventures in Vietnam.

Nevertheless, *Go Tell the Spartans* also has many utopian visions attempt to overcome the ideological constraints. The movie unmasks the United States' failure in establishing a strong Vietnamese Army and a successful government able to confront the spread of the communists or the Vietcong. At the end, the movie presents no difference between the fate of the American advisors in *Spartans* and the French advisors who killed there a few decades before the Americans or even the Greek spartans who were also killed there 400 BC. *Go tell the Spartans* also attempts to establish a state of solidarity with all Vietnamese as utopian visions counterpointing the bourgeois ideology's definition of them beyond human values.



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