



**DEPICTING VIETNAM, HOLLYWOOD FILMS AND
THE US-VIETNAM WAR POLICY (1964-1973)**

BY

KARN SUPAJARUKIT

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE IN POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS, FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2018
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THESIS

BY

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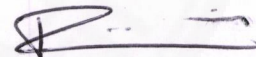
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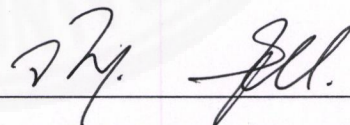
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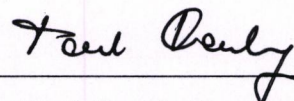
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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to analyze Vietnam War films produced by Hollywood during the Vietnam War and how they helped produce political messages for the U.S. government's war policy. The selected films include: *To the Shores of Hell* (1966); *The Green Berets* (1968); and *The Visitors* (1972). The films will be analyzed to further the understanding of implication of war policies by the Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon's U.S. presidential administrations from 1964 to 1973. The thesis will use two methods to explicate the Hollywood Vietnam War films' impacts on U.S. war policy. First, I will use textual analysis based on critical theory to understand how the films were able to produce pro-war political messages that contained the war policies by the U.S. government for the American public. Second, the political approach film production will be applied to examine the relationship between film industry and the government. Popular Culture framework serves to analyze possible mechanisms that lead to the usage of film for promoting war policies. This thesis argues that Hollywood Vietnam War films produced messages containing U.S. government war policies for the public to consume during the Vietnam War.

Keywords: Vietnam War, Vietnam War films, Hollywood, war policies, political messages

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CHAPTER 1

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOPIC

This study attempts to demonstrate the relationship between war-oriented films and U.S. war policies during the Vietnam War period. Throughout this thesis the selected films' content, tone, intensity and production process will be elaborated on to connect the role of film with international politics. I chose to examine U.S. war policies and war films during the Vietnam War (1964-1973) because the policy in this period uniquely deals with ideological conflicts during the Cold War. There are four reasons why this topic deserves greater attention.

First, U.S. war policies in the Vietnam War are significant in terms of America's role as the leader of the democratic world. U.S. presidents and governments under their control try to prove that democratic countries will have peace and maintain their sovereignty. Democratic countries will also give people equal rights and freedom. Therefore, the United States has promoted itself as a democratic leader that desires to help every country get through difficult times during ideological conflicts.

Second, U.S. war policies promoted U.S. military power as a reliable force in stopping the communist insurgency in Vietnam. The policies brought U.S. military involvement, including troops, bombs, and equipment, in order to show to the world that a democratic state was capable of fighting against communist forces supported by communist states. The U.S. government created these military involvement policies to ensure that the U.S. did not appear weak and was willing to provide support for any democratic country being invaded by communism.

Third, U.S. war policies during the Vietnam War came from the U.S. president's power that was granted from the early period of U.S. involvement. The presidents had the power to authorize military force based on the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. The resolution stemmed from the 1964 North Vietnamese attack on a U.S. battleship in the Gulf of Tonkin. According to the resolution, the U.S. President could use any protocol to assist South Vietnam. Therefore, the U.S. policies to cope with the unfamiliar war situations in Vietnam lied in military power. The Vietnam War was the first conflict during the Cold War period that U.S. presidents approved full military

support provisions. The U.S. leaders handled the unfamiliar war with a policy that was deemed suitable for the situation.

Forth, the domino theory was applied to the U.S. war policy during U.S. involvement from 1964-1973. This theory grew out of the fear of countries falling into the communist sphere. The Korean War propelled the United States to take the domino effect seriously. Indochina was the main focus in stopping the domino effect for the United States and maintaining democratic regimes in the region. The fear of falling dominoes led the U.S. to place communist power taking over Asia and stop them from propagating violence and instability. The domino effect was a major concern for the United States and it tried to stop this by coming up with policies to fully engage in the war.

These significant war policies generated by the U.S. presidents came at a major expense for the United States. The use of military combatants, technologies, vehicles and equipment was massively costly for the U.S. government during the Vietnam War. Therefore, the government needed public support for the war policies. The government tended to listen to public opinion because they did not want to lose votes and trust from the public. The government had to maintain a close relationship with the public so they could conduct their policies more easily. Moreover, public opinion can affect government decision making by not endorsing government policies. As a result, it will be difficult for the government to carry out its war policies without the public support. Therefore, the government needs to discover a way to garner public support so policies can proceed.

The reason I examine film contents is that films are an effective medium that can create convincing political messages for war policies. It is a form of entertainment that has the potential to influence the public and attract their support for government policies. Film has a strong visual and audio effect that can influence an audience. It can project current events, public figures and their actions, through fictional screenplays. This medium can blend reality to frame messages favorable for specific groups, such as government, organizations, and individual departments.

Film's cognitive power shows in war films which can have an image that influences the public to support the government during a period of war. This type of film may contain patriotic, heroic images of their own military forces in order to give

the public positive perceptions of their own military capabilities. So, the portrayal of characters, vehicles, technologies and equipment in war films can possibly generate an impact on public support. For this reason, a government can help finance films that insert political driven messages in favor of the government's war policies. A film, therefore, will be an entertaining medium that directly influences public opinion of a government's policies. This thesis will provide a view of how films generate these effects.

1.1 Scope of the Research

This thesis focuses on U.S. war policies during the years of 1964 until 1973. This is the timeframe that the United States was officially involved in the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War films selected were shown within the same period as the war policies.

I will analyze the U.S. war policies during 1964-1973 undertaken two administrations led by President Lyndon B. Johnson and President Richard Nixon. The war policies of two administrations have similarities and differences that need to be taken into account relating to the war films. The thesis examines the beginning, transitioning, and towards the end of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. President Johnson and his Democrat Party had their own set of war policies implemented during the early years of U.S. involvement and up until the peak of the war's intensity. The peak of the war was the Tet Offensive, which was a strategic attack by the communist Viet Cong guerrilla soldiers against multiple South Vietnam villages in early 1968. This was also the last year of Johnson's presidency. In following period, President Nixon and the Republican Party came in to solve the ongoing war that saw more and more American casualties each year since the U.S. became involved. The Nixon Administration launched its own set of policies from 1969 until 1973, which was the complete withdrawal of the U.S. from Vietnam. Both administrations, therefore, are the carriers of unit of analysis in this thesis.

Three Hollywood Vietnam War era films are selected for the analysis of possible U.S. government support of the film production and in return film messages favorable for war policies throughout the films' messages and film productions. The three films are: *To the Shores of Hell* (1966), *The Green Berets* (1968) and *The Visitors* (1972). These films are the only major Vietnam War films made by Hollywood during

the Vietnam War. They are significant in terms of unique presentations, how they hid political messages and the relationship between the filmmakers and government officials during the film productions. Each of them will be analyzed in relation to two periods of U.S. involvement to understand the U.S. role; from the start until they withdrew from the war. First, *To the Shores of Hell* (1966), the film is about a marine that tries to rescue his brother along with his crew members. It is the first film that portrays the Vietnam conflict during the beginning of the U.S. government's aid for South Vietnam. It is important to understand how the U.S. government decided that the United States needed to participate in Vietnam. *To the Shores of Hell* will be analyzed with reference to the early policies by the U.S. government and how they handled the communist insurgency in Vietnam. Second, *The Green Berets* (1968) is a film about a Green Beret special force unit that fights against the Communist Viet Cong heroically. I will analyze this film and link its political message and with the production process within the transitional period of the war. *The Green Berets* was shown during the end of Johnson's presidency and the start of Nixon's first term in office. I will show how the film helped provide messages during changes of administrations, which was at the same time as the war was peaking. Third, *The Visitors* (1972), which is a story about American war veterans that brought violence and trauma back to their home in the United States allows us to comprehend how political messages were designed to influence the public during the beginning of the troop withdrawal policy by Nixon. Therefore, *The Visitors* will be analyzed as a reflection of the policies towards the end of U.S. action in Vietnam.

1.2 Research Question

This thesis addresses the two questions as follows:

1. How did the Hollywood films produce political messages that support the U.S. war policies in Vietnam between 1964 and 1973?
2. How did the government support for film production help reinforce pro-war messages of the film?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This thesis demonstrates the ideology of films and the politics of film production that accommodates U.S. war policies during the Vietnam War. I will apply two theoretical frameworks to examine the film and the production politics in order to discover political relationships between them and the policies generated by the government. The two theories will later be revisited in the analysis part of this thesis.

First, the ideology can be seen in how films can reinforce and hide political messages inside the film elements; including character, screenplay, cinematography and location setting. Critical Theory introduced by Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer is applied to show the way that culture is the factor that drives a society forward at the same level or even better than the economy.¹ Adorno and Horkheimer go further by introducing the term “Culture Industry” that describes the modern mass media and entertainment media industry as a dominating force transforming culture.² The way that the culture industry impacts society is by using the ability of the media as an art form that interacts with people’s visions towards specific issues. Films are one of the media that is included as part of the culture industry phenomenon that emerges in society to generate discursive domination. Hollywood films are examples of the cultural phenomenon created by the culture industry. Adorno and Horkheimer mention that films are a form of entertainment media that is able to show an alternate version of reality. Films can produce political messages by hiding them inside film elements for the audience to consume. Moreover, Adorno and Horkheimer argues that films constitute a new form of ideological domination.³ Films have an ability to push the boundary between art and reality. Therefore, the war films are able to blend fantasy and reality of war together into one major piece that audiences are unable to differentiate. The ideological production in war films can also shape pro-war perceptions by including positive images of a country’s own military power. This thesis relies on this culture industry concept to explain how films can generate political messages that convince the public to support U.S. policies.

¹ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 1979).

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Second, the politics of film production will be analyzed through Popular Culture concept by John Fiske. The relationships between the film industry, directors, and producers with the U.S. government can be explained by using the concept introduced by Fiske, which is similar to the Adorno and Horkheimer's critical theory. Fiske introduces the idea that dominant group can use popular culture to influence the beliefs of audiences through media. Film directors and producers have the power to create films containing powerful messages that influence the audiences' perspectives. This is similar to the popular culture concept in that the audiences are able to understand influence from media while recognizing the intention of the dominant groups. For war films, the cooperative relationship between the filmmakers and the government officials can shape political messages and ideas in the film supporting government war policies during the difficult times of war. Closeness between the two groups is possible because of the expenses that come with the creation of war scenes in films. When filmmakers are unable to exceed their approximate budget to complete their film, they may reach out for government support. Government officials, therefore, are able to provide financial incentives and military facilities for film production.

The two theoretical approaches are used to justify two major ways to analyzed this thesis. First, the critical theory will be used to analyze the symbols, narratives and images. Critical theory provides the understanding of how film can depict messages that represent in Hollywood Vietnam War films and how it is used to persuade the audience. Those messages can be categorized into pro-war and anti-war sentiments which both contain different propose toward the U.S. government. Moreover, the politics of film production use Popular Culture to contextualized pro-war and anti-war films' relationship with the government. The theory used will shed light on how the film production of pro-war films received different financial and equipment supports comparing to the anti-war film. Second, Popular Culture can be used to understand politics film production on why the U.S. government choose to support the film directors that have high credibility in Hollywood more that the directors that do not have as much credibility. This reflects that U.S. government gives precedence to the cultural capital of Hollywood.

1.4 Methodology

This thesis utilizes a qualitative research methodology to examine how war films could have produced political messages that allowed the United States' government to garner public support for its protracted involvement in the Vietnam War. This thesis principally relies on textual analysis to understand the processes in which films generate pro-war political messages for a government. The texts are analyzed by using semiotics derived from in the film contents. I examine the films' ideology by interpreting symbolism and discourses that the films invoke, particularly nationalism, war mobilization, and civilizational superiority. The method of textual analysis leads to decipher multiple film elements that signify the ideology supportive of the war policies of the U.S. government.

First, the characters in the films portrayed by Hollywood actors. can be analyzed to detect the film ideology because they embody the specific personality that the filmmaker wanted them to express in the film. For war film, the main and supporting protagonist characters in the film can be portrayed as people with pro-war personalities that tend to support the policies generated by the government. They believe that the government will win the war against the evil enemy. On the other hand, the antagonist will embody the violent mindset whose savagery actions are viciously unacceptable and the protagonist needs to stop them from spreading this mindset.

Second, the film script and storyline deserve close scrutiny of the power of their symbolism. The screenplay is the major element that controls the whole story of the film. It is also the element that could contain strong political messages that support the policies. The script that the characters act out or narrate provides several scenes that can be used to convey pro-war messages. The storyline also provides images of war that the filmmakers created and used to express escalation, which is important for analysis and understanding the fantasy story that the filmmakers tried to promote as an actual story happening in the war.

Third, cinematography and sound in the films are significant elements that need to be analyzed to find out how the filmmakers symbolically associate the government policies with moral codes in their own films. For the cinematography, I focus on all aspects of camera shots, lenses, angles, color and composition that can help

send political messages throughout the film. The cinematography can tell the story through the shot of each scene containing the mood, tone, and visual information which can impact the audience differently throughout the film. The gap between the camera lens and the actors also gives a different primary focus. The close up shot can provide a facial expression and focus on how the characters feel about the event happening in the film. The far way shot that includes many characters and the background in the same composition emphasizes the ongoing events and how the dialogues between characters carry and connect the story of those scenes. The mood and tone of the films also come from the camera adjustment by the cinematographer which follows the director's intention. In addition, I analyze the sound in the films which includes the soundtrack, feature songs, sound effects that generate the mood and tone similar to the cinematography's ability. Sound in the various scenes can give us hints of political messages that the filmmakers insert in their own work. In the case of war films, the soundtrack, music and feature sounds can underline the intensify of war or emotional upheaval, and transmit pro-war symbols, to affect the audience cognitive perception.

The politics of film production requires a separate methodology from film ideology reliant on the textual analysis. To analyze film production politics, I will use process analysis to examine the creation of films step by step from development to distribution of each film.⁴ The production of war films needs a different way of analysis which goes through each process by finding the relationship between filmmakers and the government officials who collaborate to advocate pro-war political messages in support of U.S. war in Vietnam. The process of making war films includes: development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution, which will all be taken into consideration in order to find out how financial and military support by the U.S. government shapes each process.⁵ Moreover, the follow up by the government in film production will determine the closeness of the relationship between Hollywood filmmakers and government officials.

⁴ Paula Landry and Stephen Greenwald, *The Business of Film: A Practical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

⁵ Ibid.

1.5 Unit of Analysis

This thesis will use three Vietnam War films produced between 1964-1973 as unit of analysis in order to find connections between entertainment media and U.S. government policies. War films contain political messages that can influence the general public and justify government policies. There are three reasons why I choose films in examining this subject. First, war films in the United States are a major form of entertainment and were one of the most significant sources used for political purposes during the war. Second, war films can create a fictional world that contain elements of reality inducing supporter the government. The fictional component of film serves to hide pro-war messages inside the medium without the audiences noticing. Third, war films are among the oldest and most durable film genres. War films produce, shape, and structure war; identify enemies; establish objectives; and allow audiences to vicariously experience the danger and excitement of the front line or intensity in the military headquarters.

The United States government has considered entertainment media as a necessary instrument in the war. The Hollywood film industry are significant producers that launched films throughout the country. The U.S. government and Hollywood industry have had different relationships throughout history. Each Hollywood war film during war periods also have different characteristics, depending on which war are being focused on. Most of the Hollywood war depictions were shaped by the public understanding of those wars. Furthermore, Hollywood in war time often rewrites the history intended to be propaganda for the U.S. government. Films often used as a projector of America's success in war.⁶ Attempting to influence the public has been seen in war films since the early 1900s to the mid-1960s. The public were anticipated to believe that war was for self-defense and to maintain democratic ideas. Hollywood films, therefore, emphasized the message that glorious victory comes with great sacrifice from the country. The messages in war films work well with the public and complement the idea that America battles with enemies in order to survive in a democratic world.

⁶ Lawrence H. Suid, *Guts and Glory: The Making of the American Military Image in Film* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2002).

1.6 Literature Review

This thesis builds on existing literature that provides the argument relating to two major topics. First, I will examine studies which shed light on ideological power of films. The argument on how films produce messages that develop a perspective that support the government will be elaborated. I will focus mainly on the literature that discusses war films and their messages that reinforce with the government's policies and actions, while reproducing discourses of heroism, nationalism and demonized enemies. This set of literature is relevant to textual approach that this thesis takes to understanding the role of films in ideological reproduction. Second, I investigate another group of literature to understand the relationship between the filmmakers, government officials and military bureaucracy. The relationship between these groups is significant and several works has focused on how they come together to produce films that give crucial benefits to two completely different fields of professions. The literature often focuses on one specific topic, but does not include both of the mentioned topics. This literature review, therefore, will combine the two topics together by analyzing the selected films based on two groups of literature and find links between topics to address for the research question.

The first group of literature discusses works using textual analysis to war study. The literature suggests that Hollywood films are entertainment media that generate political ideologies. Film is often used as a cultural resource or as a form of popular culture that always contains a political message that represents the international relations at a particular time. Studying Hollywood film as one of the cultural resources that contain political ideology, Andrew Martin and Petrice Petro (2006) concludes that the films provide depth to the picture of security and war, which creates an ideology in international relations. They further explain that films play a role as a response to a government's situation in the time of conflict. Their work depicts how war is defined in the government's point of view. Those views are pre-emptive and for self-defense against an invading force. Films offer some of the key media tools in conveying those

purposes.⁷ Both the authors explain that these political ideologies can be seen in war films and analyzed through a character's portrayal of different nationalities, conversations between characters, the depiction of violence, and fighting for victory. Similarly, Carter and Dodds (2014) argue that film is representative of popular culture and mimics or reflects, mirror-like, international politics. The visual ability of film does not only reflect in the real world, but it is part of political world's constitution. Both Carter and Dodds elaborate that states are made by political actions within states, including: policies, strategies, military deployments, and cultural debates.⁸ These actions create ideologies which include film. Therefore, Carter and Dodds have a shared opinion with Martin and Petro in relation to film study and inter-relationship with international politics. Furthermore, the concept that films create political ideologies in international relations has been suggested by various scholars and film study has been approached in different ways. (Martin and Petro 2006; Hall 2010; Varter and Dodds; 2014; Sachleben 2014). Those different ways are shaped by different theoretical frameworks in studying how film creates political ideology, messages and visual impacts influencing the general public and their perspective towards international relations.

For this thesis, I use textual analysis framework, following the previous research by Sachleben (2014) and partially by Hall (2010). According to Sachleben, politics in film can be studied using textual analysis research, which allows observers to gain access to the cultural conversation of those particular communities.⁹ Cultural conversations are topics of focus on various issues during a particular time. Cultural resources can be depicted and awareness of political issues can be raised, which can benefit domestic and international politics. This concept emphasizes the role of popular culture as the projector of political ideology, practice, and operation, which provides images that the public will acknowledge as pro-war messages supporting the

⁷ Andrew Martin and Patrice Petro, eds., *Rethinking Global Security: Media, Popular Culture, and the "War on Terror"* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006).

⁸ Sean Carter and Klaus Dodds, *International Politics and Film: Space, Vision, Power* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2014).

⁹ Mark Sachleben, *World Politics on Screen: Understanding International Relations through Popular Culture* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2014).

government. Hall offer a similar concept to Sachleben's analysis. He suggests that culture can attract popular attention and produce the images in favor of state interests. The government's policy requires cultural resources to produce the messages that will justify their actions. Film is one of the major cultural resources that have the ability to frame the political messages as described by Hall. Therefore, textual analysis of the selected films will rely on the popular culture ability offered by both Sachleben and Hall.

The next group of literature sparks a debate around the subject of how "war films justify international war". This debate is generated from the first group of literature that points out that films create a political ideology that is aimed towards the general public. The public whose perception is impacted by the films' cultural messages may later support the government's policies. For this debate, I only examine the war film genre during the war period. The literature focuses on how films generate pro-war ideas that are used to justify ongoing wars between the United States and an enemy. However, there is literature that contend that war films presented during war try to impede the government's actions, which I will also bring up to the debate.

First, acts of nationalism in these films can be a significant moment that helps to promote reasoning for increased involvement in acts of war. For example, McLaughlin demonstrate that in *Casablanca* (1942) the main character sings a national anthem in attempt to undermine morale of their German opponents; it offers the narrative of World War II and is explained to the American people as to why it was being fought, how it was being fought and how it concerned Americans.¹⁰ *Casablanca* encourages America's involvement in World War II in order to pursue peace by eliminating the enemies. Same other literature present messages about nationalism in relation to military service, war films in a similar fashion. Additionally, these films play a role in reminding the American people that the war is indeed their concern. Robert Eberwein demonstrated this in his film *Sergeant York* (1941). This film played an important part in Warner Bros. creations, generating a campaign to enlist American support in World War II. The result was a success when the U.S. government reported

¹⁰ Robert McLaughlin and Sally Parry, *We'll Always Have the Movies: American Cinema during World War II* (Kentucky, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2006).

that there were a higher number of American men enlisting for military service after the film showed.¹¹ The film presented heroic acts by the main characters while serving their country. McLaughlin believed that it was the dialogue, but Eberwein insisted that the message came from the character's portrayal of a person at war. They both had different claims, but pointed to the film's message to the general public.

Second, films encourage dehumanizing the opposing side. Not only do war films present patriotic acts but they portray a picture of the evil enemies. Rollins and O' Connor claim that war films, such as "Hitler, Beast of Berlin (1939)", dehumanize and demonize enemies so audiences feel at ease when they are eliminated. The war film further demonizes the enemies by portraying them as denying the belief in God.¹² The strong images of evil enemies reinforce differences between us and them in the war. Another significant literature about war films' presentation of evil enemies by Harindranath suggests similarly. He adds, "The enemies were presented as alien others, embodied evil and saw as abnormal".¹³ The literature points out that when those enemies are portrayed as subhuman it leads to justification of that killing them in warfare. Boggs adds by stating that in American war films the violence created by American soldiers always has been beautified and is used as a symbol of positivity. On the other hand, the negative side of violence is always blamed on the demonized, dehumanized, savage enemy.¹⁴ The war films, therefore, portray a strong American side as the hero against the other evil enemy, which encourages the public to feel the same way.

Opposing these arguments about the depiction of nationalism and dehumanization, another group of literature insists that war films' presentation and its ideology provides a negative image of the government. That literature does not believe in war, political ideology, or any media support in war films, unlike the previous group.

¹¹ Robert Eberwein, ed., *The War Film* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

¹² Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor, *Why We Fought: America's Wars in Film and History* (Kentucky, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

¹³ Ramaswami Harindranath, *Perspectives on Global Culture* (Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, 2006).

¹⁴ Carl Boggs, *Imperial Delusions: American Militarism and Endless War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

Hilliard argues that “during war time, war films show the futility and horrors of war”.¹⁵ However, she contradicts herself by explaining that “those war films show the horrors of war but do not have an ability to protest the ongoing war.”¹⁶ Rosenbaum adds to anti-government support presentations in war films, in a similar way to Hilliard, by explaining that Hollywood directors always want to provide a message that makes the public think twice about going to war and avoiding a bloodbath.¹⁷ The intention of war films, according to these studies, is to avoid public involvement in the war to reduce casualties. However, most war films portray negative impacts from war, but are not recognized by the public as promoting the heroism of war. However, Hilliard and Rosenbaum accept the fact that films during the war still promote militarism and American involvement with the war.

The literature involving the politics of film production, provides a different debate and argument that is equally important to the understanding of film’s relationship with politics. Analyzing war film production and critics also enhances the understanding of film, public opinion and international relations. It is difficult to tell whether or not main political actors, such as the U.S. government, provide support for war films to gather public support, unless there is evidence of government involvement. Connections between war film messages and public opinion regarding war policy, the frequency of American film productions and people who watched those films were assessed by McLaughlin. According to McLaughlin, “Hollywood films produced 400-500 films every year and 90 million American citizens went to the movies at war time in the 1940s every week, which was the major entertainment because film tickets were cheap during the era of depression”.

Existing studies on the politics of film productions often explains relationships between the film industry and the government, or the filmmakers and the government officials. The strong connection of these two institutions can be the reason that films contain influential messages to promote government policies. There is also literature that mentions the film industry’s involvement with the U.S. government, but

¹⁵ Robert L. Hilliard, *Hollywood Speaks Out: Pictures that Dared to Protest Real World Issues* (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

¹⁶ Hilliard, *Hollywood Speaks Out*.

¹⁷ Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Movie Wars: How Hollywood and the Media Limit What Movies We Can See* (Chicago, IL: A Cappella Books, 2000).

it relies on the productions and public responses of Vietnam War films from the Post-Vietnam War era, which will be excluded in this thesis.

The existing works that emphasize the important role of Hollywood in supporting the government demonstrates that the Hollywood-Government connection led to the production of some pro-war films during the Vietnam War. For instance, Valantin describes Hollywood's "healthy relations" with the Pentagon, and "military-blockbusters" were produced during the 1960s and early 1970s. That relationship went even further to using military equipment from the Navy and Army.¹⁸ The strong bond between the film industry and the government during the war paved the way for the use of war films to gain public support. Valantin explains that during the Vietnam War, Hollywood often presented the military in war as gaining achievement, overcoming fear, and being courageous.¹⁹ Hollywood furthered the healthy relationship by serving as an advertisement promoting military service as an act of courage benefitting the country. However, Hollywood's presentation of military and the assumption of supporting the government still need more evidence. To prove the contention, the Pro-Vietnam war films from the Vietnam War need to be analyzed further to find the connection between government's war policy and film industry.

Following the analysis of Valantin, Boggs elaborates on the relationship by describing that Hollywood during the Vietnam War did not attempt to produce the war depictions that negatively affected the government's action in Vietnam.²⁰ Like Valantin, he contends that Hollywood tried to produce war films that garnered positive benefits from the government's actions. Boggs also furthered the discussion of the Hollywood-U.S. government connection. He argues that anti-war films were compromised and their anti-war cinematic narratives were not supported by the Pentagon and the government.²¹ The claim of strong relations by Boggs shows that Hollywood thought that the U.S. government and the Pentagon required media support.

¹⁸ Jean-Michel Valantin, *Hollywood, the Pentagon and Washington: The Movies and National Security from World War II to the Present Day* (London, UK: Anthem Press, 2005).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard, *The Hollywood War Machine: U.S. Militarism and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

²¹ Ibid.

Similarly, Shaw illustrates that not only did the Defense Department provide military hardware and manpower, the Hollywood technicians also collaborated with the army to create a mock-up Vietnamese village. The Defense Department also sent an advisor to watch the script and make sure the film content supported the government.²² Shaw insists that Hollywood and government worked together as a team in producing war films. The main goal was to win in battle, the box office and popular support of the war. However, Shaw also recognizes the flaws of Hollywood in supporting the government. He describes how other media plays a strong role in the Vietnam War period. Television channels provide a media-at-home and people do not need to go out to movie theatres. The newspaper companies played a role in criticizing war films and marked it as propaganda.²³ But, those obstacles by other media does not obstruct people from consuming films produced by Hollywood. Hollywood films were still the dominant media for public consumption as shown by box office data. The data prove that Hollywood films during 1960s to 1970s is the successful media with at least \$15 million to the highest of \$80 million in the box offices, compare to only \$26 million as the highest income in rental for home videos.²⁴

The two groups of literature, including the textual analysis of film's ideological influence and the filmmakers' relationship with government officials in the production process are often separate from each other. The literature that mentions films' ideological influence only mentions about how the author analyses films' symbolisms and decode the messages that involves politics. The other studies on the relationship between filmmakers and government officials only discusses the politics of film production and how the government and film industry intermingle with each other. The existing textual analysis literature provides little information about the politics of film production. In this thesis, I intend to address this gap in the existing literature by merging two approaches. First, the politics of film production will also determine the reason why each filmmaker produced the political messages in those particular periods of war. Second, the textual reading of the selected war films will all

²² Tony Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Michalis Kokonis, "Hollywood's Major Crisis and the American Film "Renaissance"," *Gamma: Journal of Theory and Criticism*, no. 16 (2008) : 169-206.

be analyzed to understand the political messages inside each of them. Therefore, Hollywood films, U.S. international relations, and warfare will encapsulate the production process to the films' reading. Furthermore, those messages from the film will be evaluated on how the filmmakers and government officials discussed with each other and produced those messages together.

1.7 Thesis Outline

Chapter 2: This chapter discusses the war policies in Vietnam under President Johnson and President Nixon. Both of the administrations are the focus because they have a different set of policies and ways of dealing with the public opinion in the United States. The political leadership and their policies in dealing with the worsening situation in Vietnam, from early U.S. involvement until their withdrawal will be explicated cogently to answer the implications of those policies in each period of the involvement.

Chapter 3: The third chapter focuses on the analysis of each Vietnam War film production process. The war policies during the two presidents will be linked to the film productions and whether it got support from the governments in terms of budget, military vehicles, equipment and filming locations. The discussion on continuity of U.S. government support for Hollywood's film industry will also be provided in this section. The similarities and differences between the production processes of three films will be examined to understand each U.S. government-Hollywood relationship.

Chapter 4: This chapter is about textual analysis that provide how war films during ongoing warfare portrays the ongoing conflict and how this film genre provides political ideology differently from the others. War films will be classified into three periods; according to the time each film was released. Those three periods are: the beginning of U.S. involvement with a little knowledge of the enemy, the peak point when the most devastating battles in which America was involved, and the latest films, where the U.S. withdraws from the war and focuses on the suffering veterans. The three period films will be analyzed and compared with the two administrations; from the start of Johnson's presidency, the transition from Johnson to Nixon, and President Nixon's approval on withdrawing U.S. troops from Vietnam.

Analysis & Conclusion: This section will analyze how Hollywood war films depict and support political messages and how those films are linked to U.S. war policies. The analysis will explain how this argument is premised on the theoretical framework. It will also include the possibility of further studies that can apply after this thesis



CHAPTER 2

THE U.S. VIETNAM WAR POLICIES (1964-1973)

The second chapter provides the point of U.S. Vietnam War policies that had been supervised by two presidents during the war from 1964-1973. The war propelled both presidents; Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon, to have fought both the war in Vietnam and the anti-war movement at home. The chapter describes how Vietnam War stirred a negative feedback from the American public because it increased number of American casualties. Both Johnson and Nixon had to use their political leadership to try to decrease tension by coming up with war policies that could both win the war and please the American general public. War films produced by Hollywood are necessary for the U.S. government to manipulate political messages because they have power to generate a political ideology that promote the government's policies for each of the presidents.

2.1 Lyndon Johnson (1964-1968)

President Johnson was the first American leader in the Vietnam War period that had to manage the war policies and had to deal with anti-war dissidents. Johnson had to find the supporting tools to persuade the American public in supporting the war. This section explains the trajectory of Johnson's presidency, how he articulated the war policies in Vietnam and the way he handled the anti-war demonstrations back at the United States.

President Johnson initially engaged in the Vietnam conflict when the Gulf of Tonkin incident occurred. The incident is named for the attack on the USS Maddox, a U.S. battleship, by North Vietnamese torpedo boats on August 2, 1964, who thought it was a threat. This incident triggered U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Later on August 10, 1964, President Johnson brought this incident up to the Congress and later passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. The resolution is significant because it gave President Johnson full military authorization without the Congress' approval to declare war.¹

¹ Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

Johnson introduced policies to fight against North Vietnam. In March 1965, the U.S. government sent 3,500 marines to fight alongside the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) against the North Vietnamese army, instead of sending a military advisor to aid South Vietnam.² President Johnson later took the war policies to another level and led the United States to oversee the war in Vietnam.

In 1965, Johnson launched various operations and provided military support for South Vietnam in a war against the Northern communist army. The major strategy was Operation Rolling Thunder (1965-1968), which was an aerial bombing campaign directed towards the communist area in Northern Vietnam. Johnson and his Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara claimed that this campaign sought to reduce ground combat and risks that the U.S. soldiers had to take while patrolling in the unfamiliar region. This campaign would also undermine the Northern guerrilla soldiers through the infiltration into South Vietnam area. Moreover, the campaign placed political pressure on the North Vietnamese government so as to propel it to negotiate with the U.S.³ The operation was launched in March 1965 and continued until November 1968, marking the longest period of bombing campaigns by the United States, exceeding the previous Korean War and World War II. Despite the high rate of bombardment, the operation was a failure for the United States. It failed to reduce ground combat tension and it was unsuccessful in forcing the North Vietnam into any possible negotiation with South Vietnam.⁴

During the aerial bombing from the Operation Rolling Thunder in 1965-1968, there were multiple operations and battles between North and South Vietnam. In 1965-1966, President Johnson, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Commander of the U.S. Army, General William Westmoreland expanded the war effort in Vietnam. The President increased the number of military personnel and equipment under Westmoreland's command against the North Vietnamese. The war policies did not stop at military deployment. The bombing campaign shifted to the energy resources area. In addition to bombing, the military also used a chemical weapon known as Agent

² Logevall, *Choosing War*.

³ John K. Ellsworth, *Operation Rolling Thunder: Strategic Implications of Airpower Doctrine* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2003).

⁴ Ibid.

Orange to herbicide the crops.⁵ In 1966, The United Nations believed that herbicide campaign by the United States violated the 1925 Geneva Protocol which restricted the use of chemical and biological weapons. However, the U.S. denied the violation and defined Agent Orange as an herbicide which only affected crops and plants.⁶ While dealing with the Geneva Protocol, President Johnson used his foreign relations in Manila Conference in October 1966. He conducted discussions with South Vietnam leaders and the others from Pacific nations that provided their troops for the democratic allies (Thailand, Philippines, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand).⁷ The conference concluded with the agreement of the democratic allies to put up a fight against the communist expansion from North Vietnam. President Johnson gained more assistance from the allies and continued his policies on restoring the democratic regime in Vietnam.⁸ After the conference went in favor of the United States on taking a further action against the communist, Robert McNamara advised President Johnson to deploy more U.S. troops to assist South Vietnam with the same rate of bombing campaign over North Vietnam. McNamara convinced the president to increase both U.S. troops and bombs to fight in Vietnam. However, Johnson did not entirely follow McNamara's advice. He agreed on more troops being deployed, but diverted from McNamara's advice to drop more bombs in North Vietnam than previously.⁹

In 1967, the number of U.S. soldiers in Vietnam increased under government's policy. Despite this increase of military deployment, the war in Vietnam did not go as President Johnson had planned. The war continued to escalate and showed no sign of slowing down or any possibility of negotiation. Johnson was forced to face two wars at once. First, the war in Vietnam where he believed that he could not

⁵ David Zierler, *The Invention of Ecocide: Agent Orange, Vietnam, and the Scientists Who Changed the Way We Think about the Environment* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

⁶ Doug Peterson, "Matters of Light: Arthur W. Galston," *LAS News*, University of Illinois, October 1, 2004, www.las.illinois.edu/alumni/magazine/articles/2004/galston.

⁷ William C. Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam war: Executive and Legislative Roles and Relationships, Part IV: July 1965-January 1968* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ John L. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005).

withdraw American troops because the communists would take over Indochina. Second, back in the United States, he had to cope with the anti-war public demonstrations. However, later in the same year, President Johnson attempted multiple times to initiate a peace talk but failed to proceed because North Vietnam requested an end of bombing campaign first before the negotiation could start.¹⁰ The failure of negotiating between two sides prompted President Johnson to continue the Operation Rolling Thunder. He believed that North Vietnam would suffer a severe damage which would force them to consider a peace talk. The bombing would also reduce North Vietnam's military capability.¹¹ The bombs hit major cities in the North included Hanoi, Haiphong and expanded to Cam Pha and Hong Gai. However, this continuation of bombardment sparked an argument between President Johnson and his Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. He believed that bombing the harbor would be highly destructive and result in a large number of casualties. However, Johnson argued that it was best to destroy the port as soon as possible. Johnson rejected McNamara's advice on avoiding the port. The president later adapted his decision and ordered the general to hit the port as soon as there were no ships.¹² The argument over the bombing campaign between Johnson and McNamara caused difficulty over the period because both men had a different mindset in pushing the war to an end. Johnson wanted to put heavier pressure on the North Vietnam with all cause. But, McNamara wanted to ensure that decisions were humane and would not cause large numbers of killings. McNamara sought that the policies and decisions by President Johnson did not vilify the anti-war protests in the United States.¹³

The dispute between McNamara, the architect of war, and Johnson, the leader of America came to a head in early 1968. McNamara submitted his resignation in November 1967 and officially resigned in February 1968. Meanwhile, multiple military strikes occurred in January 1968 and caused multiple battles in South Vietnam. The strikes later know as Tet Offensive, which was a military operation by North

¹⁰ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*.

¹¹ Larry Berman, *Lyndon Johnson's War: The Road to Stalemate in Vietnam* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

Vietnam who used the “Tet” or Vietnamese New Year to initiate a massive number of surprise strikes on military and civilian centers throughout South Vietnam.¹⁴ The Tet Offensive separated in to three phases and had multiple major battles in South Vietnam. The casualties were higher than expected for both sides which caused an increase in the “anti-war” movement back at United States.¹⁵ The occurrence of Tet Offensive forced the Johnson administration to re-evaluate U.S. policy in order to avoid more defeats in the future.¹⁶ On the military side, the attack caused General Westmoreland and the U.S. army a devastating number of American casualties.

The president was in an precarious position because of various factors in 1968. He had lost his right hand man (McNamara), under heavy pressure in the Offensive, and the anti-war movement continued to gain momentum in the United States. Another pressure faced by Johnson was that the Congress had now turned against the war. Johnson accordingly lost confidence and drew up a retreat plan as North Vietnam did not show any signs of backing down despite the Offensive.¹⁷ This marked the end of Johnson’s presidency and his war policies.¹⁸

2.2 Richard Nixon (1969-1973)

There are major differences between Johnson and Nixon administration in dealing with the Vietnam War. President Johnson tried to win the war at all cost by risking his position and continuously bombing and deploying more troops into Vietnam. At last, he could not end the war and his policies did not work out as planned. However, President Nixon tried to exit the war in order to secure his presidency. Nixon was well aware of the public opinion and the power of media. He came to power after the election that President Johnson did not seek for running the second term because of

¹⁴ Dale Anderson, *The Tet Offensive: Turning Point of the Vietnam War* (Minneapolis, MN: Compass Point Books, 2006).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Vivienne Sanders, *Access to History: The USA and Vietnam 1945-75*, 3rd ed. (London, UK: Hodder education, 2008).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. President Johnson had to deal with the anti-war movements that continuously pressured him on his policies that led the U.S. troops to die in Vietnam without a chance of winning. He felt the negativity from the failure of the Vietnam War effort and he decided not to run the next term in the 1968 presidential election.

the failure of his war policy in Vietnam and emerging anti-war protests in the United States. President Nixon assumed office during the height of the war. The bloodiest period was in 1968-1969 when the Tet offensive occurred. There were over 500,000 American soldiers in Vietnam at that time. The war had cost USD 30 billion a year since the President Johnson administration.¹⁹

President Nixon saw the war as an opportunity to state the difference between Johnson and himself. Nixon understood Johnson's failure in ending the war and promoted the message during his presidential campaign that he would pave the way to end the war peacefully. Nixon's decision to end the war with peace was not simple because he also realized that the way to stop American involvement in Vietnam would affect America's image as a democratic leader. If Nixon chose the wrong policy path in ending the war, he would experience the same anti-war public pressure as Johnson.²⁰

In the early period of Nixon's presidency, the president and his foreign policy consultant, national security advisor Henry Kissinger relied on two ways to address the Vietnam issue. First, he tried to escalate the war the same way as what President Johnson had done. He introduced the "madman theory", believing that the war could end by expanding the military operations in Vietnam (ending the war on the battlefield).²¹ Second, in the domestic domain, Nixon explained that he would negotiate with South Vietnam and replace American soldiers in the battlefield with the Army of South Vietnam (ARVN) instead. The replacement of American soldiers in this period was known as "Vietnamization".²² Nevertheless, the madman theory which caused a military escalation did not go as planned. President Nixon and Henry Kissinger launched the bombing campaign, Operation Menu in 1969-1970, which was similar to Johnson's Operation Rolling Thunder. Nixon ordered the use of B-52 heavy bombing planes which could carry up to 108 bombs to carpet bomb the Vietnam-Cambodian border to prevent the North Vietnamese Army enhancing communist power in Cambodia. The bombing target areas were resting places of the North Vietnamese Army, along the border, which caused the loss of both guerrilla soldiers and innocent

¹⁹ David F. Schmitz, *Richard Nixon and the Vietnam War: The End of the American Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

civilians. The operation was part of Nixon's intention in pressuring the North Vietnamese government to settle for peace negotiations. The plan did not result in a military victory for the United States. It also generated public resentment against the U.S. government. From February to March 1971, the U.S. military was defeated by then North Vietnamese in their plan to invade Ho Chi Minh along a trail in Cambodia where North Vietnam used for supplying goods.²³ The madman theory only lasted for a year and a half. According to the Gallup Poll, President Nixon's approval rating dropped significantly from, 64% to 46%, because of the raging war.²⁴ Therefore, President Nixon changed the U.S. war policy in Vietnam from military escalation to the pursuit of peace by negotiation. He implemented the Vietnamization policy by negotiating with the President of South Vietnam Nguyen Van Thieu on deploying South Vietnamese troops in the war.²⁵ The replacement would come after the United States had trained the South Vietnamese army to be able to fight against the opposition. In the end of 1971, President Nixon's withdrawal policies led to a reduction in the number of U.S. soldiers in Vietnam from 474,000 in 1970 to 156,800.²⁶ The U.S. soldiers were reduced by more than half and able to return home. This withdrawal of U.S. soldiers caused a favorable image for President Nixon. In the 1972 presidential election, President Nixon stood for re-election and won by a landslide.²⁷ Nixon continued his U.S. soldiers' withdrawal campaign and launched a new policy called "Operation Enhance Plus" from October to December 1972. The operation's purpose was to send 5,000 tons of U.S. military equipment both by air and sea to South Vietnam. The intention of this operation was to strengthen the South Vietnamese army to fight without the U.S. soldiers.²⁸ The withdrawal campaign and Nixon's operations

²³ Schmitz, *Richard Nixon*.

²⁴ Mark Lorell and Deborah Kelley, *Casualties, Public Opinion, and Presidential Policy during the Vietnam War* (Chicago, IL: Rand, 1985).

²⁵ J. Edward Lee and H. C. Haynsworth, *Nixon, Ford, and the Abandonment of South Vietnam* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002).

²⁶ James H. Willbanks, *Vietnam War: The Essential Reference Guide* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2017).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

successful avoided the loss of more soldiers, lives and military spending. In 1973, the United States completely withdrawn from Vietnam.

President Nixon went further in his Vietnamization policy in 1972-1973. The policy constituted a goal of a bigger picture in Cold War when President Nixon visited People's Republic of China in 1972. This marked the first time that the U.S. leader met with the Communist Chinese leader after a long non-communication and diplomatic agreement between two countries since the Chinese Revolution in 1949.²⁹ The democratic leader saw the president's visit as an opportunity to strengthen their relationship with China because at that time, China and Soviet Union were in a sour relationship. Nixon considered it as a shift of Cold War balance that the U.S. now had a strong relationship with China. The policy also led to a negotiation in reducing Cold War tension between United States and the leading communist supporters of North Vietnam like China.³⁰ Nixon's visit to China was part of Henry Kissinger's plan to present the president, through the media, as trying to reduce the Vietnam War's tension seriously. Moreover, the China visit led to the successful Vietnamization policy because it lowered the tension with the North Vietnamese Army and provided a chance for the U.S. to withdraw from Vietnam. The Gallup Poll showed Nixon's approval rating because of the end the United States involvement in Vietnam in total of 75%.³¹

2.3 U.S. Public Opinions toward War Policies

The two administrations from Johnson to Nixon, responded to the public opinions differently. The similarity is that both presidents took public opinions into consideration and applied those feedback as one of the factors in decision making. But, the difference was how each president handled the public opinions during their time in the office. President Johnson convinced the public to support the war but did not withdraw the troops when the public started to protesting against war in Vietnam. In contrast, President Nixon managed to withdraw the American soldiers from Vietnam and tried to secure his seat in the White House by applying the policies that satisfied the American public.

²⁹ Lee and Haynsworth, *Nixon, Ford, and the Abandonment*.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Lorell and Kelley, *Casualties, Public Opinion*.

This section explicated the similarity and difference of the two administrations' response to public opinions. It also shows how public opinions toward policies and changed over the period of the war. The public opinions used for this analysis stem from survey polls and mass media. These two sources provide evidence on the public responses to the war policies during Johnson and Nixon administrations.

2.3.1 Survey Polls

The early years of the United States involvement in Vietnam led by Johnson Administration did not affect the public opinion poll substantially. According to the Gallup poll, the public support for the Vietnam War was still quite strong with 63% approval in 1965.³² The percentage, however dropped steadily throughout the war period until Johnson's term expired and he was succeeded by President Richard Nixon.

Survey Polls reflected American citizens' feedback concerning Johnson's Administration. Gallup polls during the first year of U.S. operations in Vietnam favored President Johnson and his goal to stop the Communist domino effect. However, Johnson's pro-war campaigns in Vietnam were at odds with the public's anti-war opinion after the war continuously escalated. This antagonistic opinion mirrored in major anti-war movements during President Johnson's time in office.³³ In 1966, after a year of U.S. military interference in Vietnam the Gallup polls showed a decline in the president's approval rating, dropping from 63% to 49%.³⁴ The Harris poll also showed a significant decline and further ascertained what kind of government action the general U.S. public preferred.³⁵ Most of the general public in those 49% still supported the military operation but was willing to strike a peaceful negotiation with the Communist enemy to avoid further casualties.³⁶ The Gallup and Harris poll also revealed public

³² Lorell and Kelley, *Casualties, Public Opinion*.

³³ Robert E. Lester, ed., *The Johnson Administration's Response to Anti-Vietnam War Activities* [microform] (Bethesda, MD: LexisNexis, 2004).

³⁴ It should be noted that the drop of approval rating from 63% in April 1965 to 49% in May 1966. The downward of the rating was to lowest drop since the U.S. took responsibility in Vietnam after the French withdrew from there colonized area in Indochina.

³⁵ It should be noted that Harris poll was focused and took into consideration in the further operations in the same level as Gallup poll by President Johnson during his presidency.

³⁶ Gibbons, *The U. S. Government*.

mood by pointing out that “the President is being criticized for his decisions so far and it is the first sign of American impatience with the long war”.

The strong pressure from the polls is one of the reasons that the President had to end the war as fast as possible. He needed to maintain his approval ratings. However, the poll pressure from the escalation period of the war in 1966-1967 did not stop President Johnson from activating more American troops in Vietnam. In 1966, the increase in American troops caused more anti-war movements protesting against the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The anti-war protestors believed that the war was unnecessary and that their government was brainwashing the American people into believing they could win the war in Vietnam. The estimated 20,000-25,000 anti-war protestors continued to oppose the bombing in Vietnam from 1965 to 1966.³⁷ In 1968, President Johnson’s approval rating hit its lowest alongside the highest number of American casualties in Vietnam.³⁸ According to the Gallup poll, only 35% of the American people approved the Vietnam War during the massive protest. This marked a turning point of public opinion. Many felt they did not receive the feedback that they wanted from the government. The President could no longer ignore the poll that increasingly put pressure on the government to offer a better solution in the Vietnam conflict. In his final year, Johnson had to deal with anti-war movements in the United States and the battles following the Tet Offensive. During the massive strikes by North Vietnam, McNamara’s resignation caused massive changes in the administration because he was the engineer of Vietnam War policies. The decision was in parallel with anti-war demonstrations and the increase in numbers of protestors since early 1967, the anti-war movement of around 500,000 protestors in New York and in the late 1967, with around 100,000 protestors in Washington D.C. This period also marked the occurrence of violent protests, such as The Chicago March against the U.S. government.³⁹

The negative impression of the general public was expressed through polls and caused the President to reconsider his war policies in Vietnam. Johnson’s failure to

³⁷ William Thomas, *The Home Front in the Vietnam War* (Milwaukee, WI: World Almanac Library, 2005).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Lorell and Kelley, *Casualties, Public Opinion*.

end the war with his policies throughout his presidency reflected in all the polls that he chose not to fully take into account when it came to his decision making. The moment he chose to take the poll feedback earnestly, it was too late to handle all of the problems at that time. The interview with the senior policy advisors and other officials from the Johnson Administration were in mutual agreement that the decline of public support shown through polls was a significant factor that forced President Johnson to change his policies.⁴⁰ The Gallup poll approval rating of 35% in 1968 also partially put pressure on Johnson's position as President of the United States. 1968 was the last year of President Johnson's term in office for his first presidency. However, he did not seek a second term and announced that he would not run in the presidential race in that upcoming election. The poll showed public response to Johnson and his government officials' refusal to end the war in Vietnam. The low approval rating, therefore, pressured President Johnson to announce significant solutions to avoid even lower disapproval ratings from the public. In addition to 'not seeking for re-election', he also announced the order of de-escalation in Vietnam by stopping the bombing in North Vietnam and pursuing a peace negotiation.

During the Nixon presidency (1969-1973), public opinion and the media and press continued to cause great concern for the government. The press media sided with public opinion, which was anti-war.⁴¹ President Nixon wanted to make sure that he could control both the domestic protests and the war situation from his seat at the White House. However, according to Gallup poll, the President's approval in dealing with Vietnam War when Nixon assumed office was nearly the same as when Johnson announced he was not seeking re-election which is only 44%.⁴²

President Nixon tried to neutralize the situation by took the poll responses into his consideration. He gave a speech, promising the anti-war demonstrators and

⁴⁰ It should be noted that the senior policy advisors and other officials include George Ball, McGeorge Bundy, Leonard Unger, Robert Komer, Walt Rostow, Robert McNamara, all gave an interview in March to July 1982.

⁴¹ Caroline Page, *U.S. Official Propaganda during the Vietnam War, 1965-1973: The Limits of Persuasion* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

⁴² Lorell and Kelley, *Casualties, Public Opinion*.

fellow Americans that he would end the war and bring back home the troops.⁴³ He used the madman theory in an attempt to achieve a quick military victory which turned out to be a disaster from 1969-1970. The public image of the President and the government turned out to be the same as the Johnson Administration. By promoting peace, President Nixon and his team were trying to lower pressure from the public because of the worsening outcome from the madman theory-oriented policies.⁴⁴ He undertook the Vietnamization policy to make sure that the media and public would still support him as a president. President Nixon was more concerned with the domestic reaction than the actual situation in Vietnam.⁴⁵

Nixon's response to public opinion was successful after he shifted his madman theory to Vietnamization policy. His approval rating for went up rapidly and he was able to handle the pressure from the public opinion in Vietnam War withdrawal campaign.⁴⁶ Unlike the Johnson Administration that were on a downhill slide when it came to the public opinion and the media, Nixon knew how to deal with anti-war movements and persuade the public. The president also had a great strategist, advisor, and security expert, Henry Kissinger who helped coping with the media and made sure that the government conducted the best foreign policies for the country. After Nixon ensured that he had peace with the anti-war groups, he tried to present the U.S. image as a peaceful ally with South Vietnam who was willing to negotiate with North Vietnam.⁴⁷ The president achieved the termination of the direct U.S. involvement in Vietnam War.

2.3.2 Mass Media

The pressure from the U.S. mass media is one of the reasons that convinced President Johnson to initiate a cease fire and negotiate with the North Vietnamese fighters. The media and anti-war protest clearly made their point that they did not support the government's policy in Vietnam towards the end. The media, such as

⁴³ Martin Manning and Clarence Wyatt, eds., *Encyclopedia of Media and Propaganda in Wartime America* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011).

⁴⁴ Page, *U.S. Official Propaganda*.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Lorell and Kelley, *Casualties, Public Opinion*.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

television, radio and newspaper, in the later years of Johnson's Presidency showed the brutality of the war in Vietnam. The U.S. media also broadcasted anti-war messages during 1968 when the U.S. government failed to contain the higher numbers of American casualties.⁴⁸ Johnson's final year was met with heavy media criticism of every government decision and increased support for the anti-war protest. Newspapers during the Johnson period often criticized his policies during the escalation of the war and up until the end of his presidency. Newspaper articles from the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, and Chicago Tribune all had similar news criticizing the government's actions.⁴⁹ The headlines of each newspaper often highlighted a series of battles with high casualties. The pictures alongside those articles were often controversial and questioned the U.S. government's role in Vietnam.⁵⁰ The newspapers published more horrific images in the headlines during the Tet Offensive, with a picture of gruesome dead innocent South Vietnamese civilians that sparked more anti-war reactions from the public. Moreover, the media, especially television broadcasted war footage every day during the intense offensive.⁵¹ This anti-war media also put pressure on Johnson not to run for re-election.

Nixon adapted aggressive strategies for dealing with the media back in the United States. Unlike Johnson, Nixon and his government fought back against criticism. In November 1969, Nixon gave his first speech about Vietnam amid media criticism after the election. The speech contained a message that struck back at the media and he promoted the idea of the "great silent majority".⁵² The president emphasized the unity of Americans back at home and undermined the media criticism by saying that "North Vietnam cannot humiliate the U.S., only Americans can do that." Nixon furthered his fight against the media criticism by claiming that the main objective

⁴⁸ Gary R.Hess, *Vietnam: Explaining America's Lost War*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2015).

⁴⁹ These newspapers are popularized nationwide during the war escalation and the controversial Tet Offensive from 1965-1968. The newspapers archives are captured from online news document.

⁵⁰ U.S. newspapers often headlined with the U.S. military actions and the death amount that increased every day, along with the gruesome pictures from war.

⁵¹ Hess, *Vietnam: Explaining America's Lost War*.

⁵² Ibid.

of the war was to go over the heads of the columnists in reaching the American public's opinion of Vietnam. Nixon appointed his Vice President Spiro Agnew to take control of the war against the television networks and other media.⁵³ Vice President Agnew advanced a frontal assault against the media stating that their coverage was unfair, one-sided, and prone to querulous criticism. Agnew even referred to journalists as "nattering nabobs of negativism."⁵⁴ President Nixon continued to discredit the media demonstrating that the media often reported battles without underlying the purpose of each battle in Vietnam that the U.S. involved. He further mentioned in his memoir that "the media tried to demoralize the government's actions and weaken the unity of American people".⁵⁵ The onset of the Nixon administration showed the different approach his government towards media. Despite the heavy criticism, the media broadcast from 1969-1970 were not as effective as in Johnson's period.⁵⁶ Later in 1971-1973, the media came into the spotlight against the U.S. government again. President Nixon had to face another media obstacle during Vietnam War period after fighting against them since the start of his presidency.

On June 13, 1971, the press media released a controversial document of U.S. government involvement in the Vietnam issue. Daniel Ellsberg, a political activist and U.S. military analyst released 7000 pages of confidential Pentagon Papers about U.S. decision making in Vietnam over President Johnson's period.⁵⁷ Ellsberg shared the papers with the *New York Times* and prompted a major controversy of Vietnam against the government.⁵⁸ Those papers described an expansion of military operations about which the government had not informed the public.⁵⁹ The publication later went viral throughout the press media.

⁵³ Hess, *Vietnam: Explaining America's Lost War*.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Susan Gold, *The Pentagon Papers: National Security or the Right to Know* (New York, NY: Benchmark Books, 2005).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Neil Sheeman, "Vietnam Archive: Pentagon Study Traces 3 Decades of Growing U.S. Involvement," *The New York Times*, June 13, 1971. The Pentagon Papers mentioned by New York Times were described as lies by the Johnson Administration. The papers reported that Kennedy, Johnson and McNamara were all key villains that hurt the war.

President Nixon, believed that he should do nothing because those leaked papers were concerned with the previous administration's decision making in Vietnam. But, after a talk with security advisor Henry Kissinger, Nixon changed his mind. He believed that the government needed to be involved because the leaked classified information could discredit the war policy that the Nixon administration would execute later in the Vietnam War.⁶⁰ On June 16, 1971, three days after the first release of Pentagon Papers, President Nixon authorized the Justice Department to sue *New York Times* editorial board and constrain the publication of the classified information. *The New York Times* later went to the Supreme Court and argued that the American people had the right to know the truth about Vietnam. On June 30, 1971, with a vote of 6-3 favoring the press media side, the court decided that the U.S. government did not have enough reason to block the publication of Pentagon Papers. The press media such as *New York Times* and other press had the right to resume the publication. Persons behind the leak like Daniel Ellsberg who was charged with espionage (because of the release of classified information in 1971) later won the case and was released of all charges in 1973.

The involvement of President Nixon in Pentagon Papers case created a strong negative image of Nixon viewed by the public. The efforts of restraining and ceasing the media created major problems in the execution of war policies in Vietnam. According to the Gallup Polls, the disapproval rating for President Nixon's handling of Vietnam War and domestic issue were 46% and dropped to 41% in 1971.⁶¹ The president and his policy strategists were strongly concerned about the presidential election in 1972 because of the domestic anti-war protests and the Pentagon Papers controversy. Despite the strong concerns, Nixon won another presidential election in November 1972. The American people believed in the new policy which allowed President Nixon to win the presidential election against Senator McGovern from the

⁶⁰ David Rudenstine, *The Day the Presses Stopped: A History of the Pentagon Papers Case* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1998).

⁶¹ Lorell and Kelley, *Casualties, Public Opinion*.

Democrat Party by a landslide. The new Nixon's policy called Vietnamization sought to brought back 400,000 American troops and POWs back from Vietnam in 1972.⁶²

After Nixon tried to avoid more domestic trouble caused by Vietnam, he spied on Watergate to give him an advantage over the opposing presidential candidates.⁶³ President Nixon tried to avoid the media getting an insight into the scandal by pushing forward with the Paris Peace Accords between United States (on behalf of South Vietnam) and North Vietnam in January 1973. The accord labelled as an "Agreement on Ending War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam", in which the agreement included the ceasefire, halt and withdrawal of troops of both sides.⁶⁴ The President successfully ended the American involvement in Vietnam but the media war at home did not secure his public support. The war policies for both President Johnson and Nixon had decreased the public support. A peace policy normally increases public support, but in the case of President Nixon, domestic issues including the Pentagon Papers and the Watergate scandal contributed to the decline in popular support. The scandal also impacted the war campaigns in Vietnam. Nixon's intention on ending the war by withdrawal did not get praised as much as it could have because of Watergate. The scandal overshadowed the war ending policies that should have been in the spotlight for Nixon's presidency in 1973. This controversial scandal caused Nixon to acknowledge the impact that press media played in shaping public opinion. The nationwide coverage of the Watergate Scandal led to a media crackdown, which created the image of corrupt and authoritarian Nixon.

As a result of Watergate scandal, *The Washington Post* and *New York Times* took turns in investigating the scandal and pressured the president to resign.⁶⁵ The

⁶² Gregory A. Daddis, *Withdrawal: Reassessing America's Final Years in Vietnam* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁶³ John M. Murrin et.al., eds., *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People: Vol. II: Since 1863* (Boston, MA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2010). Watergate was a political espionage in which the Republicans spied on the Democrats facilities for the political information. The presidential campaign's illegal contributions came into spotlight combined with the story of Watergate Scandal caused a turning point after Nixon's re-election in 1973.

⁶⁴ Daddis, *Withdrawal: Reassessing America's Final Years*.

⁶⁵ Jules Archer, *Watergate: A Story of Richard Nixon and the Shocking 1972 Scandal* (New York, NY: Sky Horse Pony Press, 2015).

media was able to convince the American public to pressure the President over the scandal. After the heavy pressure over the President's association with the spy-taping at the political opposition's headquarters, Nixon later announced his resignation and Vice President Gerald Ford took over as a new president.⁶⁶

The U.S. war policies during the period of both Johnson and Nixon administration were criticized by press media throughout the history of Vietnam War. Both Johnson and Nixon had a difficult time dealing with media criticism over the government's policies. This criticism by the U.S. media encouraged the American people to support the anti-war demonstration against their own government. In the Vietnam War period, the press supported the government only when the war was still unclear whether who would win. This was also the same case as anti-war protestors because they followed the news from the press media. At first, the press supported the war because they only thought it was the matter of containing the rise of communism. The press later changed their position because of the increased intensity and violence in the Vietnam War.⁶⁷ The public opinion and the anti-war movements were both of concern to the U.S. government and the public voice had a significant impact on the government's decision making since the war started. Public disapproval was a major power causing the president to be in the pressured situation because he did not represent the public voice. The public opinion poll also highlighted the public's dissatisfaction with their own government contributing to the withdrawal of American troops.

In conclusion, the profound impact of public opinions, polls and press media propelled the U.S. government to look for alternative assistances. One of the major sources to steer public opinion to the direction favorable to the war is the entertainment industry. The Hollywood is the major entertainment media producer that was targeted by the U.S. government as it could produce political messages through film content and show it in the theatre all around America. Those films produced by Hollywood could justify the war. Accordingly, government officials foresaw that the relationship with Hollywood filmmakers was case of necessity. Therefore, the government sought to co-produce war films with Hollywood, which could possibly

⁶⁶ Ford came in after Spiro Agnew resigned because of the tax evasion scandal.

⁶⁷ Lorell and Kelley, *Casualties, Public Opinion*.

provide a pro-war political ideology message hidden inside the entertaining Hollywood films.



CHAPTER 3

POLITICS OF FILM PRODUCTION

This chapter discusses how politics of film production can be a major factor inducing the creation of pro-war films to shape positive public opinion about the Vietnam War. It includes several components that the filmmakers tried to insert in their own amount of government support and the filmmakers' own perspective towards Vietnam. The components involved with the politics of film production can be categorized into three major topics: director's ideological leaning, directors' relationships with the U.S. government, and financial incentives. Each factor will be analyzed based on the similarities and differences in each war film. There are two Hollywood pro-war films during the Vietnam War (1964-1973): 'To The Shores of Hell' (1966), 'The Green Berets' (1968) and one anti-war film, 'The Visitors' (1972). The pro-war films will be analyzed separately from the anti-war films to present a different side of how films can be connected with war policies. It is important to take these films into the study of politics of film production because each of the filmmaker have a different level of relationship with the U.S. government officials.

3.1 Director's Ideological Stance

The ideological leanings of a filmmaker or director can shape a film's messages in the direction that an individual or group wishes to promote. Ideologies can influence political messages produced by the media because it is a cultural source that has the power to influence public consent.¹ The dominant social group or individual, in this case, the filmmakers have the ability to operate moral perspectives of the public and build a social alliance to support their goal. Media, such as film, is a powerful cultural source that reduces consensus and manufactures consent. Therefore, the media

¹ Daya K. Thussu, *Internationalizing Media Studies: Impediments and Imperatives* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009); The idea generated from Gramsci's Hegemony concept. Gramsci built this concept upon why the dominant group such as government, leaders, public figures are able to dominate their ideology and cultural believe toward the general public. He further explained that the dominant group uses the power of cultural and political consensus through media, schools, church, political parties, etc.

binds different people together by promoting collective values, which are built by the ideology of dominant group.² In this case, directors have the ideological power to put in political messages. There are difference political views that need to be examined thoroughly in order to understand each filmmaker's ideological leaning.

An ideological leaning towards one viewpoint or another results in a different film narrative and messages that lean towards the ideology favored by the filmmaker. Filmmakers had a different ideology in producing a film illustrating the Vietnam War. The ideological leaning of each filmmaker could be seen differently from the year that each film was shown. Each film depended on the filmmakers' political party affiliation, government's policies, the public responses towards those policies and the situation of war in Vietnam. These films would later be passed on from the filmmakers' ideology to the public audiences.

'To The Shores of Hell' was the first U.S. featured film about the Vietnam War during the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and was directed by Will Zens. This film plays it role in the early period of U.S. involvement in Vietnam War. The film was shown in 1966 during President Johnson's presidency and during that period, the number of American troops increased rapidly in 1966. Initially, President Johnson had the public, media and the full military power on his side. Johnson was willing to send the large number of troops to assist the South Vietnamese soldiers in their battle against Communist North Vietnam.³ In 1966, President Johnson took control of the country's decision and his willingness to take a risk by sending more troops to a foreign land. The entertainment media such as films in 1966 was also under the pro-war influence by the president. Filmmakers were willing to support the government in involving with the war in Vietnam. Will Zens is one of the directors that got influenced by the U.S. government and expressed his pro-war opinions inside his film. The film by Zens was

² James Curran, "Communications, Power and Social Order," in *Culture, Society and the Media*, ed. Janet Wollacott et al. (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 198-231.

This media concept by Curran further the Hegemonic idea by Gramsci. He compares the media with the medieval church. They have the mutual social power in gather around the different types of people. They are both dominant in their own period and they both able to insert their own ideological messages to the public.

³ Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001.

among the first Vietnam War films that fully support the government's policies, and the government were willing to support the film production as well.⁴ Moreover, *To the Shores of Hell*'s production has specific characteristics worth analyzing in this study because it was considered a B film with low-budget but got a huge amount of U.S. military support.⁵

Will Zens and his film, '*To the Shores of Hell*' has a strong patriotic leaning towards the U.S. Government because of Zens' own background. He used his own job background and experience in war by produce a mirror image in the film. He based the film's location, equipment and vehicles based on his own experience as a test pilot in World War II.⁶ His reliance on his war memory were fully provided in the film in which he tried to focus on the small group of characters go on a mission instead of the large army battle. This could be because of the limited budget but it also came from the director's intention of the film scale.

After he finished with his air force service, he continued to be associated with the political personnel in several departments.⁷ The experience of being a pilot shed light on militarism as an ideological influence on his work in the film industry. Zens believed in U.S. military capabilities and supported the use of military power against the enemy. He believed that the U.S. was a militarily mighty nation that

⁴ Another film that mentioned about Vietnam was entitled '*A Yank in Viet-Nam*' (1964). It was starred and directed by Marshall Thompson. '*A Yank in Viet-Nam*' was shot in 1963 and released in February 1964. The full U.S. military combat troops were not deployed into Vietnam until after President Johnson granted full military power in August 1964. '*A Yank in Viet-Nam*', therefore, was considered to be in the same group as the war films in pre-escalation time when the U.S. only sent military advisors to South Vietnam. In contrast, '*To the Shores of Hell*' was released in 1966 during the rise of military conflict in the Vietnam War.

⁵ Jeremy M. Devine, *Vietnam at 24 frames a Second: A Critical and Thematic Analysis of 360 Films about the Vietnam War*, reprint ed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013); It should be noted that B films during the 1960s were labeled as a low-budget film which distributed by Hollywood. The budget of *To the Shores of Hell* was unclear but it was considered as a B film category which estimated the total amount of USD 200,000~300,000 included the government support.

⁶ Harris M. Lentz, *Obituaries in the Performing Arts, 2012* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013).

⁷ Harris M. Lentz, *Obituaries in the Performing Arts, 2013* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014); Zens had produced the '*Star Fighter*' (1964) during the pre-Vietnam period and '*To the Shores of Hell*' (1966), in which those films both starred future Congressman Robert Dornan. Zens and Dornan had a strong relationship and they were both willing to produce a film that supported the U.S. Government.

authorized full military power and was always prepared during peace time.⁸ Militarism as an ideology in Zens' perspective was based on his experiences during World War II and he tried to carry the same ideas into Vietnam through his film. Zens' militaristic framework can be seen in other sources including posters, music and television that carried the same World War II propaganda to the mid-1960s in Vietnam.⁹

Zens' ideological leanings allowed the elevation of his film from the drama-war film to the media that was a part of war, a propagandist film that supported the Marine Corps and the U.S. Government. The director was willing to provide propaganda messages from the U.S. Government to the American public during the rising conflict between North and South Vietnam. The film could be seen as the influential propaganda that was created from the director's perspective and how he tried to persuade the American public to believe in the same way that he did.

In a similar vein, John Wayne was known for his support of the U.S. Wars such as World War II, the Korean War, and later the Vietnam War. Wayne's pro-war perspective was also the reason he chose *The Green Berets*, a novel with the same name that tell the story about the special force unit that fight against enemy to be the theme of the film. However, Wayne's adaptation of the novel was changed to suit the situation in Vietnam.¹⁰ *The Green Beret* was marked as a significant film during the highest tension between the two sides of the war. It was the period that the United States had the highest number of troops deployed throughout Vietnam. Moreover, the film was released during the Tet Offensive which was the largest attacks from North Vietnam in the Vietnam War period that U.S. involved. *The Green Berets* also came during the changing period of U.S. presidents, from Johnson to Nixon. It was the moment of shifting war policies and how the U.S. government dealt with the worsening situation in Vietnam. Furthermore, the film main center of attention was about the special force called the Green Berets, an elite group of soldiers that took on a special task in a most

⁸ Lisa M. Munday, *American Militarism and Anti-Militarism in Popular Media: 1945-1970* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Garry Wills, *John Wayne's America: The Politics of Celebrity* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1997). The major reason he adapted his film from this novel was because the novel was the best-seller in 1965. It also encouraged that 'The Green Berets' were strong troops and courageous heroes that fought for their country when the war erupted.

difficult situation. The Hollywood film during this period didn't portray as much films about Vietnam and the only major pro-war film was 'The Green Beret' that came out in the final year of the Johnson administration.

Despite The Green Berets being a pro-war film, Wayne's background and ideology in his film are different compared to Zens'. John Wayne was also known as one of the celebrities that supported the Republican Party in Orange County, California.¹¹ He was considered a conservative republican that was willing to use his star power and his films to persuade the public to believe the same as he did. Wayne was not in favour of the Democratic Party or the Democrat government during the Vietnam War. Nonetheless, during the Johnson Administration, Wayne was willing to support the Democrat government's Vietnam War because policies he deemed communists as a threat to the U.S. and its position in Asia. Wayne, as an American icon and Hollywood superstar, felt that he had a chance to glorify Americans and promote anti-Communist sentiment.¹² He believed that both Republicans and Democrats had a mutual objective in getting rid of communism.

John Wayne, as a republican, generally tended to support any war, particularly the Vietnam War; which in effect created tension with Hollywood activists who opposed the war including Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland.¹³ Wayne accused them as traitors and chose to believe that he made a rightful decision to support the country. Wayne saw the others that joined the anti-war campaign as villains and himself as a real life hero. He promoted himself as a leader of moral value in American men and his desire of supporting the government should be followed by other Americans.¹⁴ Wayne's commitment to reinforcing the pro-war messages always showed in his film. His ideology underpin in the narratives and depictions throughout the entire 'Green

¹¹ Scott Eyman, *John Wayne: The Life and Legend* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2015).

¹² Ibid. Wayne made a first trip to Vietnam as a representative for the documentary that he made with the Department of Defense, and later went to the U.S. camps by himself without any entertainment units to follow him. When he came back, he realized that Hollywood needed to promote the war for the government because there were large anti-war demonstrations throughout the country during 1967. This experience boosted Wayne's confidence in producing a pro-war film against the communist.

¹³ Glenn Greenwald, *Great American Hypocrites: Toppling the Big Myths of Republican Politics* (New York, NY: Three Rivers Press, 2008).

¹⁴ Ibid.

Berets' movie screening. The characters' portrayal, the demonization of the Viet Cong and the representation of Vietnam issue as a matter of war between democracy and communism were all based on Wayne's script with an overseeing edit by the Pentagon.

3.2 Directors' Relationship with the U.S. Government

The relationship between film directors and the U.S. government can show how the government is involved in shaping the film's messages in promoting war policies. The government support determines the direction of the film, the script review and the financial sponsorship that the filmmakers receive in the film production. Moreover, the directors' perspective on the war and how they support the political party of their choice could lead to a relationship that benefits both the film production and the government. The strong relationship could give some freedom in terms of the scripts and dialogues in the film as long as it supports the government. The government would also benefit from it because the film could persuade the audiences' perspective towards the war in Vietnam.

Each of the film directors had distinct patterns of the relationship with the U.S. government. The party leadership of the U.S. government also changed from Democrat to Republican during the war period and its policies were accordingly different from one administration to another. This change set the tone for each film portrayed. There were also differences in the director's political stance in pursuing the relationship with the government and defense ministry. The intentions of the directors that was derived from their interpersonal relationship with the government could be determined as either a pro-war and anti-war perspectives.

'To the Shores of Hell' was the first film during the Vietnam War era directed by Will Zens. He mentioned in his obituary section that this film was produced to support the U.S. government involvement in Vietnam.¹⁵ Moreover, the year that the film started production in 1965, director Will Zens was able to receive the actual footage of military landing in Da Nang from the U.S. Department of Defense and put it in this non-documentary film.¹⁶ The film also emphasized the necessary usage of

¹⁵ Lentz, *Obituaries in the Performing Arts*, 2012.

¹⁶ Devine, *Vietnam at 24 Frames*. HUS-1 helicopter provided by Marine Corp.

weaponry and vehicles that had been deployed to Vietnam. The helicopter was mainly depicted in this film to promote the superiority in the sky by the United States air force and later became the blueprint of depicting the vehicles in Vietnam War films.¹⁷ Zens' history as a test pilot gave him opportunities to receive support from the government. The government recognized Zens' potential of capturing important war moments and putting them in his film. However, as a film director he was not as popular as some of the other famous Hollywood directors.¹⁸ This limited the support the government provided, including in terms of public relations for the film. Zens had to promote the film by himself along with his Hollywood associated company.¹⁹ The limited support, however, did not slow down Zens' intention to spread a pro-war message in 'To the Shores of Hell' because he believed that the public had to support the government in order to win the war. This marked the possibility that 'To the Shores of Hell' film would serve as the propagandist media material popularizing the U.S. foreign policies to the American audiences.

In 'The Green Berets', the relationship between the filmmakers, directors and the U.S. official departments also played a significant role in the production process. The production background of Wayne's decision to produce 'The Green Berets' played a strong part in depicting film with pro-war perspective during the increasing occurrence of anti-war protests. Wayne had travelled to Vietnam himself and had a first-hand experience with the government's policy to counter with the communist Viet Cong enemy. Having close relationship with the Department of Defense and the U.S. Government, he was granted the budget, location and the military equipment support from the government prior to producing his film.²⁰ The film production received a large amount of government support more than they provided to Will Zens' 'To The Shores Of Hell' mainly because of Wayne's pro-war reputation and

¹⁷ Devine, *Vietnam at 24 Frames*.

¹⁸ Lentz, *Obituaries in the Performing Arts*, 2012.

- Zens was considered as an independent director that produced films with the independent company that Hollywood sponsored.

¹⁹ Devine, *Vietnam at 24 Frames*.

- HUS-1 helicopter provided by Marine Corp.

²⁰ Lawrence H. Suid, *Guts and Glory: The Making of the American Military Image in Film* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2002).

he gave the script to the Department of Defense to edit on what should or should not be portrayed in the film.²¹ So, the department and government were fully aware and acknowledged that the film content should provide positive military supporting messages to the American film audiences. The film had been re-scripted and re-developed to fit the satisfaction criteria of the Defense Department, Pentagon and the U.S. Government's perspective on Vietnam. The Pentagon also sent officials to watch the film production closely to ensure that Wayne and his film crew produced a film containing only messages that praised the U.S. government's actions.²² This strong relationship between Wayne and the government officials was the main reason that "The Green Berets" became a blockbuster Vietnam War film. The full budget and other military support provided Wayne a crucial advantage in convincingly crafting pro-Vietnam War messages that had been approved by the government. 'The Green Berets', therefore, had a bigger scale of production and more military equipment used in it than 'To the Shores of Hell'.

However, in reality, it was the period that the pro-war propaganda was completely opposite with reality at that time. The anti-war mood dominated the majority of the American public, not the war mongers as the film suggested. "The Green Berets" was promoted by the government alongside the Hollywood studio, but the press' reaction to the film's portrayal of the war was not particularly positive. The media criticized Wayne's film as a substandard Hollywood propagandist film.²³ Despite the press media backlash, the film turned out to be a success in terms of climbing the box office. It is safe to say that 'The Green Berets' potentially served as the government propaganda machine which could convince the public to support the government's war policies amidst growing anti-war sentiment.

Examining in 'To the Shores of Hell' and 'The Green Berets', filmmakers' relationships with government officials, provides insights into pro-war messages in the

²¹ Suid, *Guts and Glory*.

²² The Pentagon normally sent only one technical advisor to supervise every aspect of the given military support. In *The Green Berets*' case, there were three advisors including a technical advisor to supervise the military procedures; a liaison man at the Ford Benning command that arranged the usage of required equipment and men (primary filming location); overall the liaison man would consistently inform the Pentagon office about the progress of the film's production.

²³ Suid, *Guts and Glory*.

films. The two films are similar in that they both are pro-war films and each have a great relationship with the U.S. government, which led to receive military assistance. That great relationship was generated from the filmmakers' backgrounds, experiences and how well they were acquainted with the officers or personnel within the government. As a result, the government was confident in providing support for the filmmakers they trusted. The degree of the relationship was also different between the two films. The closeness of Will Zens ('To the Shores of Hell') and the government, and his intention to produce a pro-war film did not receive as much assistance at the John Wayne film ('The Green Berets'). This is because the government recognized the differences between the filmmakers' reputations. The U.S. government recognized Will Zens as a low-budget director who happened to be a veteran that had a pro-war belief. John Wayne, on the other hand, was an American icon, an ideal of masculinity and one of the most commercially successful actors in Hollywood history.²⁴ He was also recognized by the government as a major government supporter of the Vietnam War. Therefore, the U.S. government was willing to provide as much support for John Wayne as possible. He represented an image of how the public should support the government's actions.

3.3 Financial Incentives

The U.S. government has provided the financial incentives for film directors in order to generate public understanding of their war policies. Moreover, financial incentives tend to encourage film directors to produce more films that support war policies so as to attract financial support from the government. The government has offered various incentives for the film companies and their productions include direct funding provision for the production, tax reduction, shooting location, and

²⁴ Larry A. Van Meter, *John Wayne and Ideology* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014). John Wayne's cinematic popularity rose to prominence for his iconic American Western roles. He also portrayed numerous heroic protagonists which were labeled by the public as American icons. The general public went even further and called him the closest to the ideal man. According to Harris Poll's annual list of "American's Favorite Movie Stars", John Wayne consistently lands on top 10 of the list. His popularity among the American public still continued after his death. Wayne was one of the most successful actors in Hollywood because of his continuously high box office returns.

equipment provision etc.²⁵ At times, these financial benefits depend on the filmmaker's relationship with the U.S. government and the Department of Defense. The strong relationship between filmmaker and government have a high possibility that the government will provide the necessary financial support to reduce the cost of the film production.

The impact Hollywood films have on public opinions during the war have been considered by the U.S. government's consideration since the World War II period. The Hollywood film industry is the centerpiece of entertainment media in the United States with most of the American audience visiting the movie theatre once every week.²⁶ The films supported by the U.S. President and the government have been seen since President Franklin D. Roosevelt who realized the political necessity of supporting the film propaganda.²⁷ The same scenario occurred in the Vietnam War period with President Johnson's relationship with Hollywood.²⁸ The U.S. government, therefore, tend to provide the financial incentives if the film has a positive encouragement towards the government's action, policy and strategy during the war.

If we consider the U.S. Government and Department of Defense financial support during the 1960s, the relationship between Hollywood and Pentagon was strong because the various filmmakers produced multiple war films that required a military location, equipment, and vehicles to depict the genuine images of war. Those films could not have been made if the production would not have received support by the government.²⁹ Most of the Hollywood films still used the World War II theme in order to persuade the audience to accept the possibility that U.S. heroic soldiers that would be deployed again in the upcoming Vietnam War. 'To the Shores of Hell' (1966) and 'The Green Berets' (1968) heavily relied on the government's financial support which

²⁵ Paul Murschetz, Roland Teichmann and Matthias Karmasin, eds., *Handbook of State Aid for Film: Finance, Industries and Regulation* (Switzerland: Springer, 2018).

²⁶ M. Todd Bennett, *One World, Big Screen: Hollywood, the Allies, and World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University Of North Carolina Press).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ernest D. Giglio, *Here's Looking at You: Hollywood, Film & Politics*, 11th ed. (New York, NY: Peter Lang Inc., 2007).

²⁹ Jean-Michel Valantin, *Hollywood, the Pentagon and Washington: The Movies and National Security from World War II to the Present Day* (London, UK: Anthem Press, 2005).

was the result of a great relationship with the government and the intention of producing pro-Vietnam War films.

Director Will Zens of 'To the Shores of Hell', asked for a financial support from the government and the Department of Defense. These agencies gave the limited financial provision for Zens because of the background he had as a test pilot in the U.S. Army Air Force. The film also secured a shooting location in a military base camp (Camp Pendleton, California) and got support with military equipment provided by the Department of Defense.³⁰ Despite having military vehicles, equipment and personnel support from the U.S. government, the overall financing support of the film from the government or defence department was low. The budget was estimated at USD 200,000-300,000, excluding the other support, which put 'To the Shores of Hell' in the B film category. The scale of the film is considered as small to medium for a war film.³¹ However, the support by the department was able to help the director in controlling the budget for small scale film and spend less on the military equipments which already granted from the government's provision. The financial and military utility supported by the Department of Defense provided the chance for the director Will Zens to depicted the images of heroic American soldiers and strong military power of the United States army. Zens was satisfied with the outcome of his own pro-Vietnam War film that could have a chance in encouraging more military recruitment during the intense period of the war.

As the director 'The Green Berets', John Wayne was familiar with producing the pro-war films. Wayne used to associate with the World War II films that got supported by the government because of his governmental assistance contribution in his multiple pro-war films. John Wayne did not want to fully rely on only the government's financial support, so he also contributed his own funding to the film. However, he still received the large amount of budget assistance which granted him greater production scale than Will Zen's To the Shores of Hell.³² Wayne supported the U.S. government in the Vietnam War, but he also noticed that this war was unpopular

³⁰ Devine, *Vietnam at 24 Frames*.

³¹ Ibid.

³² The total amount of assistance combine with Wayne's own budget is USD 7,000,000.

among the U.S. citizens.³³ For this reason, Wayne wrote a letter to President Johnson stating that “It was extremely important that not only the people of United States but those all over the world should know why it is necessary for us (Americans) to be there (in Vietnam)” and furthermore, “the most effective way to accomplish this is through the motion picture medium”. Wayne also told President Johnson that “the film would inspire a patriotic attitude on the part of fellow Americans”.³⁴ The letter persuaded the President to provide military assistance for John Wayne to use in his film. The support included advisors, equipment, arms, vehicles and the shooting location at Fort Benning, Georgia. The Johnson administration approved the shooting of ‘The Green Berets’ film at Fort Benning for 107 days. In terms of vehicles and equipment, the government coordinated with the Pentagon to loan out airplanes, helicopters, weapons, troops and technical advisors to take control of the military assistance.³⁵ Despite Wayne’s own intention in funding his own film, the military assistance by the government had reduced a massive amount of budget spending for him and the Hollywood production company. In addition, the film also could imitate the image of Vietnam better with the actual U.S. military equipment and vehicles from the government assistance.

‘To the Shores of Hell’ and ‘The Green Berets’ received financial and military assistance during the period of the war from both back home at the United States and on location at Vietnam. The financial and military assistance for both films in the early sixties led a negative outcome in terms of film critical reviews, but positive in terms of the box office by the American citizens. The script and narrative of both films was approved by the U.S. Government. The films were attempting to articulate the government’s intention to support the South Vietnamese and that the situation in Vietnam was not an internal war because leading communist countries, such as the Soviet Union and China, were providing aid to North Vietnam.³⁶ For this reason, the government saw that they could provide assistance to these films which were supporting the government during the war.

³³ Giglio, *Here’s Looking at You*.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Nick Turse, *The Complex: How the Military Invades Our Everyday Lives* (London, UK: Faber, 2009).

³⁶ Giglio, *Here’s Looking at You*.

Nonetheless, the financial incentive in pro-war films also have a contradiction between each other. For *To the Shores of Hell* and *The Green Berets*, each film received the different amount of sponsorship by the government. Despite having military vehicles, equipment and personnel support from the U.S. government, the overall financing support of the film from the government or defence department was low. The budget was estimated at USD 200,000-300,000, excluding the other support, which put 'To the Shores of Hell' in the B film category. The box office was unclear but it was considering a successful B film with an estimated grossing of USD 800,000.³⁷ Will Zens intended to depict pro-war messages through individual patrols. 'The Green Berets', however, received USD 7 million, which increased the production scale and made it into a blockbuster A film with a high expectation of financial success. The film was a major financial success in 1968 with a total box office of USD 32 million because of the high amount of government budget support.³⁸ John Wayne's intention was to create a full scale pro-war film with the full image of the mighty U.S. military in battle. Differences in financial support were dependent not only on the director's reputation, but also on the expected scale of the film being portrayed by the director.

The financial incentives received by these pro-war films could influence the films' productions, scripts (screenplays), and narratives. The government used financial sponsorship to control the films' direction and insert messages that they wanted the American audiences to hear and see. There are differences in the pro-war films, but the goals of the films were still alike. The films' purposes were to encourage public support of the U.S. government in the Vietnam War.

3.4 Anti-War Film Production during the Vietnam War

Elia Kazan's 'The Visitors' (1972) is the only anti-war film produced while the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War was ongoing during Nixon Administration. 'The Visitors' reveals a different politics of film production from the first two pro-war films, which needs to be closely analyzed. This film shed light on a limited amount of

³⁷ Devine, *Vietnam at 24 Frames*.

³⁸ Kevin Hillstrom and Laurie C. Hillstrom, *The Vietnam Experience: A Concise Encyclopedia of American Literature, Songs, and Films* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998).

government support during the war. The analysis of this “counter” case allows us to understand the negative political consequence the dissident filmmaker faced.

3.4.1 Ideological Stance of Anti-War Filmmakers

The anti-war ideology of the filmmaker was inspired by pacifist-liberal thoughts unlike the pro-war filmmakers. Elia Kazan and his son, Christopher believed in producing an anti-war perspective in their film, ‘The Visitors’. Kazan’s perspective on Vietnam War and other wars promoted by U.S. government is completely different from the previous two film directors. Kazan was associated with the Directors Guild of America (DGA), the guild that sought interests for both directors and motion picture studios during the 1970s.³⁹ He often supported the black-listed directors that produced controversial films criticizing American government. Most of the DGA members supported Kazan on directing the film that could spark political awareness for American audiences⁴⁰ Kazan was a famous director in that period that had a dispute in anti-war narratives in his films with the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), the investigative committee of U.S. House of Representatives. HUAC investigated the disloyalty action committed by the U.S. citizens. Kazan often got investigated by HUAC because of his film-directing and the context of film, especially ‘The Visitors’ that caused him to fight against the HUAC testimony for several weeks. This dispute with HUAC caused *The Visitors* to only shown in the theater for 3 weeks and didn’t get any promote from the government.⁴¹

Kazan was a liberal anti-communist who was a critic of U.S. involvement in the war in Vietnam.⁴² He strongly criticized communism, specifically towards the

³⁹ Brian Neve, *Elia Kazan: The Cinema of an American Outsider* (London, UK: I.B. Tauris, 2009).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ron Briley, *The Ambivalent Legacy of Elia Kazan: The Politics of the Post-HUAC Films* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

⁴² Lisa Dombrowski, *Kazan Revisited* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2011); Elia Kazan is a liberal filmmaker who always criticized the communist regimes. He had a brief flirtation with Communism in the early-1930s, but he came to hate Communism because of the American Communist Party’s (CPUSA) feedback on his liberal ideology.

American Communist Party (CPUSA). Since his early period as an American filmmaker, he was known to produce liberal films. His hatred for communism was expressed in his autobiography and it was an ideological matter. Kazan's personal beliefs made him decide to produce multiple anti-communist films prior to 'The Visitors' and the Vietnam War.⁴³

Kazan's liberal ideology was not only anti-communist. His work in 'The Visitors' expressed his liberal perspective against the involvement of the United States in Vietnam. Although Kazan was a liberal who supported the anti-communists, he disagreed with most of the war supporters who believed that war was the solution of ending communism in Vietnam. He criticized the war as having no sign of ending and causing high American casualties.⁴⁴ Kazan criticized the war without depicted any war to battles in Vietnam. He decided to depict how the war affected the participants after returning home. His depiction shows that a liberal can condemn communism, but not support U.S. war policies and the Vietnam War.

3.4.2 Anti-War Film Director's Relationship with the U.S.

Government

The relationship between the 'The Visitors' filmmaker and government officials was limited compared to the first two films. First, the film had to depict Vietnam through the lens of the Nixon administration's policies, which differed from those during Johnson's administration. The Visitors produced during the period that U.S. government received a public negative feedback on Vietnam involvement. The anti-war demonstration and the U.S. approval rating pressured President Nixon to withdrew from Vietnam. Second, the filmmaker's political messages were intended to be anti-war. Kazan's intention was to produce a film that criticize the U.S. government's Vietnam policies.

⁴³ Dombrowski, *Kazan Revisited*; Kazan had a strong negative perspective towards the American Communist Party (CPUSA) because the party wanted him to apologize for the anti-communist messages in his films. His anti-communist films included Boomerang! (1947), Panic in the Streets (1950), Viva Zapata! (1952), Man on a Tightrope (1953), and On the Waterfront (1954)

⁴⁴ Ibid.

‘The Visitors’ was the only Vietnam War film screening during the period of the Nixon Administration. Vietnam War during this period was not a popular film topic to use as a main theme material. The American people were sensitive and not ready to watch a film that contained a story about Vietnam because of the loss from the war. The devastation propelled the Hollywood film industry to take a hiatus from Vietnam-related production because of the negative impact towards the war. The Hollywood film directors, producers and studios did not have a strong relationship with the government in the same way as ‘To the Shores of Hell’ (1966) and ‘The Green Beret’s’ (1968) had during the President Johnson administration. Hollywood held back from supporting the U.S. government because of the anti-war sentiment among the American people which was prevalent in the early-1970s. They also did not want to support any new war escalations that could lead to more American casualties. However, ‘The Visitors’ (1972) by director Elia Kazan was the only film that based the story on Vietnam War and encouraged the people to remember that what happened in Vietnam was a result of U.S. government pro-war policies. The film illustrated the Vietnam War veterans in their difficult time of adjusting themselves to the civil lives. ‘The Visitors’ relied on Elia Kazan’s reputation as one of the great film directors, providing a deep message while using somewhat mediocre actors.⁴⁵ Unlike the pro-war filmmakers that received government support, ‘The Visitors’ was one of the first films that the government attempted to boycott because of the negative projection of the Vietnam War policies that would ultimately encourage more anti-war sentiment. He did not have any relationship with the government officials like the pro-war filmmakers had. Kazan tended to focus on his own film production, which showed the cruelty of the war and what happens after U.S. Vietnam War veterans came back to America.

⁴⁵ Briley, *The Ambivalent Legacy*; It should be note that Kazan’s directing style often worked with the unknown actors because he did not want the audience to stick to only the actor’s reputation. Most of those actors would later become big name stars in Hollywood. ‘The Visitors’ also carried the same Kazan’s directing style to this film. Most of the actors in ‘The Visitors’ were unknown actors and some of them were in their first film as a professional. Patricia Joyce, James Woods, Steve Railsback, Chico Martínez, besides Patrick McVey were all debuted in this film. The only famous actor after the film was James Woods who later became a two-time Academy Awards-nominee.

3.4.3 Financial Incentives of Anti-War Film

‘The Visitors’ was the only film that criticizing the Vietnam War in the early 1970s. The film did not follow the government’s guidance in persuading the American audience to endorse the war. The film director, Elia Kazan, wanted his film to articulate the anti-war perspective, which was a new way of projecting the image of the war to the audience. The result was that Kazan had to position his film in the minimum budget category and used only the available location, equipment and staff that he had. He later had to borrow from the bank and United Artist studio for the film production.⁴⁶ Most of the crew members were his family and he had only four technical staffs.⁴⁷ The filming location was his Connecticut home in the countryside and the equipment used was 16mm stocks that he already had.⁴⁸ ‘The Visitors’ was not supported by the government and it did not get any recognition until one of the Hollywood film studios decided to take care of the budget. Kazan said in the interview that ‘The Visitors’ had a budget of USD165,000 because no one, not even the government would put up the money to back the film financially as it showed the harsh reality about the Vietnam War veterans. The government concealed the people from accessing alternative information about the Vietnam War. The U.S. government limited the film screening of the anti-war film in order to reduce the widespread of anti-war messages and disrupt box office returns. This policy caused the film to do moderately in terms of box office with the total of USD375,000 because the film screening was limited in the cinema.⁴⁹ Only when the film was shown later in France, did it later received some positive reviews from the Cannes Film Festival.⁵⁰ The film had to face the pressure from the government that used to have entertainment media support. Therefore, the Visitors received a different public reception compared to the pro-war films that received a much greater benefits from producing pro-Vietnam War films.

⁴⁶ Tino Balio, *United Artists, Volume 2, 1951-1978: The Company That Changed the Film Industry* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009); United Artists Digital Studio (UA) is an American film studio founded in 1919. The studio later acquired by Metro Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) in 1981.

⁴⁷ William Baer, ed., *Elia Kazan: Interviews* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2000).

⁴⁸ Neve, *Elia Kazan*.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Briley, *The Ambivalent Legacy*.

Kazan's 'The Visitors' could be considered as an anti-Vietnam War film which did not receive government sponsorship. The film messages concur with the withdrawal policy by President Nixon as it depicts the outcome of President Johnson's failure in his war policy. It was a risky venture for the film that tried to tell the truth about the American war and veterans when the war still had not yet officially ended. 'The Visitors', again, took a distinctively different approach from the first two films. The different aspects of government connections and the Pentagon's involvement of the scripts caused a completely different amount in financial support for the film. As a result, 'The Visitors', in comparison to the first two films that get full financial and military support, did not necessarily generate pro-war messages. It could be seen that the film only used the helicopter sounds with the director's own property to imitate Vietnam and the aftermath life of veterans because of the limited budget.

In conclusion, the U.S. government support for pro-war films are doing well in provide the assistance for the filmmakers. The government full military and budget assistance provides an advantage to the pro-war filmmakers. The assistance diminished the high expenses of war film production. However, the anti-war films did not receive any military and financial support from the U.S. government. The U.S. government also limited the film that contained anti-war messages from screening in U.S. domestic cinema. The anti-war film was treated differently and did worse in terms of budget spending and box office.

CHAPTER 4

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

This chapter provides the textual analysis of the three Vietnam War films during the Vietnam War. The textual analysis based on critical theory will be used to examine how the filmmakers inserted pro-war and anti-war political messages within their own films. The textual analysis provides the understanding of narratives, symbols and dominant images underpinning the film during the war period. Symbolism or signs are a way to hide messages behind the form of what is shown in film. The symbol separates into two parts, which are content and form. The content is what the symbol represents and the form is what it actually is. These two are combined together to create a symbol that creates an impactful meaning for the film.¹ Symbols in media, like film, can come in various elements, including: characters, plots, cinematography, sounds and music.² Therefore, it is important to understand how film can get messages through symbols, narratives and images across to an audience. In the case of Vietnam War films, the symbols represent the meanings of war, military, civilians, the struggle of democracy against communism. Analyzing how the films symbolized the war will determine where pro-war and anti-war political messages have been inserted for the audience. This chapter is divided into two sections: the plots and dialogues, and the textual analysis.

4.1 The Plots and Dialogues of the Films

4.1.1 To the Shores of Hell (1966)

‘To the Shores of Hell’ is a film that mainly depicts the Viet Cong as a sub-human, savages and beasts, brainwash by a bad regime and an inability to cooperate. Their savageness is emphasized in various scenes and included in the U.S. soldier’s dialogues. The continuous dehumanizing of the enemy supported the idea that the U.S. government could not overlook the Vietnam situation. These negative images of the

¹ Pamela J. Smith, *Symbols Images Codes: The Secret Language of Meaning in Film, TV, Games and Visual Media* (Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 2010).

² Ibid.

Viet Cong encouraged the public to side with the U.S. government and their policies in impeding the savage Viet Cong from occupying all of Vietnam.

‘To the Shores of Hell’ is about a U.S. Marine officer, Gregg Donahue (Marshall Thompson) who went to Vietnam to rescue his doctor's brother, Gary (Robert Dornan) who is captured by the Viet Cong.³ The scene is introduced by the Marines’ Hymn or The Halls of Montezuma song in the background which represents the United States military strength along with showing images of each armed force. The iconic song has been adopted since 1929; it is the oldest official song of the U.S. armed forces that is used for a symbol of respect for military service.⁴ Marines’ Hymn is used as an opening and ending credit of this film because it fits perfectly with the lyrics. The first verse describes the Marines will fight from ‘The Halls of Montezuma’ to ‘The Shores of Tripoli’, they will fight from air, land and sea for our rights and freedom, and to keep our honor clean”.⁵ The song matches with showing the promotional footage of U.S. armed forces that will fight for their country and never back down.

After the opening credit saluting the military men in service, the first scene starts with the U.S. general ordering that the practice group will be sent to the shore in Vietnam to fight for their country. The General tells Major Gregg Donahue that his brother has been a captive in Viet Cong’s area. Major Donahue, who has been served for his country, went to Vietnam several times had to make a decision whether to go back to Vietnam to rescue his brother or not.

Gregg Donahue is on a date at the beach with his fiancé and confess to her that he needs to go back to Vietnam to save his brother Gary. Donahue’s request for permission made his fiancé believe that this maybe would be the last time that she has a chance to spend time with her lover. Gregg Donahue explained the circumstance that his brother Gary would face right now to his fiancé:

Gregg Donahue: “The Cong (Viet Cong) is the dark gone good at torturing civilians”

³ Rainer Salzger, *Viet Cong: Charlie and His Deadly Tricks* (Berlin: Epubli GmbH, 2011); Viet Cong is also known as the National Liberation Front [NLF], a North Vietnam communist guerrilla force, a major enemy of the United States and South Vietnam.

⁴ Eugene Alvarez, *Parris Island* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2002).

⁵ Ibid.

The dialogue, by Gregg Donahue reflects the perception of Americans that their enemies, the Viet Cong, are barbaric group or savages. Gregg Donahue is reference to Viet Cong as torturing savages is convincing because the character used to be a marine who had an experience from several trips serving in Vietnam. Gregg apparently understands how to describe the Viet Cong's action towards U.S. armed forces more than an American civilians who have never been to Vietnam before. Accordingly, Gregg Donahue is set to make a rescue mission in Vietnam by making a trip with the marines that he had taught in practice during an earlier scene.

Gregg Donahue arrives with other marines to the coast and he is ready for combat in Vietnam. The film also shows the supporting characters that take side with the United States. Gregg Donahue meets with the priest named Father Jack and his South Vietnamese companion, Mick Phin in Vietnam. The supporting characters shows the overall members of the United States allies in battle. For the priest, he represents as a Korean War veteran and a civilian that is willing to assist the U.S. marines at all cost. Another person is a South Vietnamese native that represents the South Vietnam army who the U.S. military experts have trained since the Eisenhower Administration.

Before Gregg has a chance to meet with the priest and the South Vietnamese man, the Viet Cong hid in the jungle and spots the South Vietnamese ladies washing their clothes in the river. The Viet Cong tried to rape one of the girls, but another girl got away and called for help from the priest and the South Vietnamese man. They were in time to rescue the girl and killed the Viet Cong. Moreover, when Donahue went on a patrol to meet with the Priest with a group of marines, they were attacked by the Viet Cong who were familiar with their own territory. They used bows and arrows, instead of guns. One of the marines, a sergeant, asked Major Donahue:

U.S. Sergeant: "What kind of war is this, bow and arrow?"

Major Gregg Donahue: "Well, it still kills"

Both the rescue and the bow & arrow scenes depicts the United States' enemy as a savage sub-human who used everything they could, including the undeveloped weapons to kill and rape the victims. The conversation between U.S. marines shows the savageness and underdevelopment tactics by the enemy. The conversation later includes the US. priest sharing his own experience with Gregg

Donahue. They talk about the Viet Cong's cruelty from the priest's experience. Father Jack said that the Viet Cong kill every civilian including nurses and children, they even killed the baby in the womb. Gregg is well-aware of the enemies' capability, and he is also worried about his brother's safety.

Major Gregg Donahue and another marine officer, Bill, discuss with the priest about the rescue mission. Later, they all reach the Viet Cong base camp that is guarded by Viet Cong guerrilla soldiers. Mick Phin, the South Vietnamese man, volunteer to go in and rescue Gary because Mick Phin is able to use his Asian appearance to blend in with the other Vietnamese people. After he got into the camp, one of the Viet Cong took Mick Phin to the doctor. In the room, Mick Phin met Gary that is curing one of the wounded soldiers. Gary sarcastically talks in English to the Viet Cong soldiers while rolling the gauze:

Gary: This is gonna keep you out of your National Liberation Front (NLF/ Viet Cong) for about 4 weeks, no more attacking defenseless villagers for you pal. Gonna miss that, aren't you? Aren't you gonna miss that you, pity face, communist pig. Yeah, you like killing women, don't you? Like killing little kids, don't you? What I want to put in you is that stripping knife. Wouldn't it be good instead of morphine? Sure it would be good.

After he finishes curing the wounded Viet Cong, Gary calls out for Mick Phin to get a cure. At that time he does not realized that Gary and the priest sent Mick Phin to rescue him.

Gary: Well, that's familiar, fell on your own little booby traps didn't you? Sit. Well, you better hope you're safe, is not covered with that slimy poison you guys used. This is gonna hurt you a lot more than it does me. Why is a kid like you doing with a gun anyway? Why aren't you out there helping your parents bring out that rice crops? What do you kill your own people for?

The aggressiveness of Gary shows that he is unwilling to mistreat the Viet Cong because he believes that these wounded soldiers are demonic human beings that

killed innocent people. This conversation brings to the fore the stereotype of savage Viet Cong in the same way as earlier scenes.

Another stereotype towards the Viet Cong surges after the previous conversation between Gary and Mick Phin. The Viet Cong major named Toang comes in and condemns Gary for his cursing towards wounded soldiers. Major Toang said “Fight me! We will not stand for your colonial arrogance”, which can be interpreted as the Viet Cong is belief that the U.S. combat intervention is not different from the French colonization in Indochina. Gary insults him back by saying that “come on, get it [the communist lecture] out of your system, Wall Street warmonger, Yankee bandit, colonial imperialist, come on! Get it out of your system”. He understands those insults as a communist brainwash system that characterized the Viet Cong as a savage. Gary mentions how the Viet Cong also holds a prejudices against Americans because they believe that the Western foreigners are bad human beings that eager for their colonial occupations in Vietnam. The insults does not affect Gary’s love for his country and his conviction that the U.S. does the right thing in South Vietnam. The same conviction can be seen when Mick Phin kills a Viet Cong soldier in the first aid room and tell Gary to come with him. Gary asks “Who the hell are you?”, but Mick Phin responds “not a word, you have to trust me”. Gary trusts him despite the impending dangerous rescue in the middle of this Viet Cong based camp. The mutual trust between the United States and South Vietnam is consistently portrays throughout the rescuing scene. It can be seen when Gary as an American fight alongside Mick Phin, the South Vietnamese villager with the same goal, that is to get rid of the northern communist threat.

After the success of rescuing Gary out of the Viet Cong base camp, Gregg, Father Jack, Gary and Mick Phin all reunite and head back to the American camp. Along the way they saw a field of villagers’ corpses. Gary states that this is the result of a Viet Cong ambush and that he has seen these atrocities before. Suddenly, the Viet Cong come out to attack the survivors but failed because of the help from a U.S. chopper that is out on patrol at that time. This scene shows how North Vietnamese guerrilla almost take down U.S. marines and yet they managed to overcome the trouble.

By the end of the film, only the brothers, Gregg and Gary Donahue survive the rescue mission. The other characters, Father Jack and Mick Phin, are killed while

protecting the brothers. Gregg and Gary return to the U.S. camp safely via a chopper patrol and later got back to the United States.

The film 'To the Shores of Hell' depicts a variety of pro-war images. It influences the audience in different ways while maintaining enough entertainment to conceal the political propaganda. Those images emphasize that the war in Vietnam is necessary because the U.S. government needs citizens to be drafted into the armed forces and approve the government's action. Another two films portrayed the different images for different periods and are equally significant to analyze. Those films will provide the understanding of how films elevated themselves in depicting the ongoing war in different periods.

4.1.2 The Green Berets (1968)

'The Green Berets' is a pro-war film that illustrates American government's and soldiers' good intention. The film also emphasizes that only the United States can stop the war between North and South Vietnam. This film also depicts the U.S. soldiers as heroes who help civilians and kill the villainous enemy, the Viet Cong guerrilla soldiers. The Green Berets also go further in the strong alliance between the U.S. soldiers, South Vietnamese soldiers and civilians.

This film is about the US army involvement against the communist Viet Cong in Vietnam. It mainly focuses on the United States Army Special Forces or known as Green Berets on which provide service in combat and counterinsurgency internationally. The film uses two locations, Fort Bragg, the headquarters of the United States Army Special Forces in North Carolina and South Vietnam. It narrates the story according to experiences of three main characters:

1. Colonel Jack Kirby (John Wayne): a commander that leads the special forces into combat in South Vietnam
2. Sergeant Peterson (Jim Hutton): a USARF member in Colonel Kirby's troops
3. George Beckworth (David Janssen): an American cynical newspaper reporter

The story is centered on how different types of people experienced an ongoing war and how they deal with that situation. The film's introduction part is

similar to 'To the Shores of Hell' (1966) as it uses the military song as their main soundtrack which is the Special Forces' most popular patriotic anthem, "Ballad of the Green Berets" (1966).⁶ Another similarity between 'To the Shores of Hell' and 'The Green Berets' is the military drill scene would accompany the military songs at the start of the film.

After the opening credit, the film begin with a scene at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the headquarters of the United States Army Special Forces. Colonel Kirby arrives at Fort Bragg to see the American press and civilians as the audience listens to the Green Berets' presentation about their military capabilities. Here another main character is introduced George Beckworth, (David Janssen) an American newspaper reporter who is listening to the sergeants answering the audience's questions. The newspapers reporters asks one of the sergeants named Muldoon (Aldo Ray):

Newspaper reporter: Why is the United States waging this ruthless [Vietnam] war?

Sergeant Muldoon: Foreign policy decisions are not made by the military. A soldier goes where he is told to go and fights whomever he's told to fight.

George Beckworth: Do you agree with that, [another sergeant] Sergeant McGee? That the Green Beret's just a robot with no personal feelings?

A female reporter: Will you please answer the question, Sergeant McGee? Do they press the button? Do you men do what you're told to do without any personal feelings or opinions?

Sergeant McGee: We have feelings and opinions. It's hard not to form them out there.

⁶ Kevin Hillstrom and Laurie Hillstrom, *The Vietnam Experience: A Concise Encyclopedia of American Literature, Songs, and Films* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998); Ballad of the Green Berets by Barry Sadler has the influence from Robin Moore's Green Berets novel similar to this particular film by John Wayne.

A female reporter: Everyone knows the South Vietnamese are fighting and dying for their cause. But how do you know they want us?

Sergeant McGee: As soldiers, we can understand the killing of military. If this same thing happened here in the United States...everyone would be murdered. But in spite of this, there's always some little fellas [South Vietnamese] out there. They need us, and they want us.

The heated conversations between the reporters and the Green Berets reflect a viewpoint of American people who at that time wonder “Why do we have to wage a war that we did not start?” The involvement has caused numbers of casualties and it would continue to rise if the United States would remain in Vietnam. The reporters including Beckworth also consider the American soldier as a robot with no feelings and always did what their higher commander tell them to do. The reporters further accuse the Green Berets of being a killing machine, rather than saving lives in South Vietnam as they claim. Beckworth, reporters and other civilians audience do not feel right about the war conducted by the U.S. government. South Vietnam should be able to handle the conflict by itself as the U.S. has already trained their South Vietnamese soldiers. But the Green Berets do not back down with those reporters’ questions. Both of the sergeants explain how desperate the war is. The Special Forces like them are truly required to make a tour in Vietnam and secure the victory over the communist enemies.

The conversation continues with one of the housewives in the crowd asking the sergeant why she does not receive this type of news about the South Vietnamese desperately needing help from the United States in the newspaper. Sergeant Muldoon responds back “Well that’s newspapers! You could fill volumes with what you don’t read in them”. It is a strike back against the press media seen as an opposing side for the military. However, the meeting scene does not end up only the claw back from the Green Berets against the press. It later continues with another issue introduced by George Beckworth’s curiosity about the government:

George Beckworth: How do you know we should be fighting for this present government [Johnson Administration]? They've had no free elections. They have no constitution. Six months ago, a committee is appointed to form a constitution. Still no constitution.

Sergeant Muldoon: The school I went to, Mr. Beckworth, taught us that 13 colonies...with the same goal in mind. After the Revolutionary War, took from 1776 to 1787... 11 years they came up with the peaceful efforts, a paper that all 13 colonies would sign. Our present Constitution.

The scene depicts a general doubt the public have about the current Johnson Administration. The people did not truly support the government decision and there were more anti-war demonstrations because of the cruelty of war in Vietnam. However, the sergeant answered back, stated that war is what leads to peace, as the history has shown in the foundation of the United States. For the historical fact alone, Sergeant Muldoon, on behalf of the Green Berets who has made a tour in Vietnam, confirmed that there is no way around the situation but to fight in a war. Therefore, the scene also portrays the soldiers' desperate needs for the public support. The government needs the people in the country to unite and support them similar to when they got supported in World War II.

Another way that the U.S. special forces prove that the war in Vietnam is not just only an internal problem between the North and the South appears in the next conversation between Beckworth and Sergeant Muldoon. Beckworth at that time, remains unsatisfied with Muldoon's answer. Beckworth reminds to Muldoon again, "there's a lot of people that believe this is a war between the Vietnamese people. It's their war, let them handle it". Muldoon immediately asks Beckworth back, "Let them handle it, Mr. Beckworth?", the sergeant points out to the captured weaponry. Those weapons are from Red China, USSR, Czechoslovakia, all produced in communist countries. Muldoon concludes the argument by stating "There is no need to recognize that what's involved is a possible Communist domination of the world." This

conversation reflects the American concern of the global spread of Communist. And the democratic leader countries like the United States need to prevent it.

In addition, the film also depicts contrasting viewpoints of the press and military about the Vietnam War. Beckworth's argument represents the belief that the American army should not join the Vietnam War. In contrast, Sergeant Muldoon believes that the sacrifice of soldiers in a combat is for keeping the world in peace. The military are ready and willing to sacrifice if it is necessary. The film does not provide the answer as to whose viewpoint is preferred.

George Beckworth later approaches Commander Mike Kirby after sergeant Muldoon finishes his statement. Beckworth asks commander Kirby about South East Asia, "Colonel, your brainwash sergeant didn't sell me... Didn't sell me on the idea that we should be involved with South East Asia." He believes that it is still unnecessary to fight other people's war. Kirby simply asks back "Have you ever been to South East Asia?" and Beckworth responds with a disappointing voice "No, I haven't." Kirby tries to show that you only have the right to pass a judgment only when you have been to Vietnam and experienced what has happened over there.

At the Green Berets' facility, the third and final main character that is different from Colonel Kirby and reporter George Beckworth is Sergeant Peterson (Jim Hutton). He is introduced as a soldier from a different division and Kirby wants him to be in his Vietnam team. Peterson represents a soldier with a lower rank than Kirby who is willing to do the dirty work, as he is first seen by Kirby when he is stealing military equipment from the Green Berets' supply depot. The scene shows Peterson as a sly comedic character who gets things done to benefit his division. Kirby wants Peterson for the tour in Vietnam because of his 'never quit' personality. Peterson has been promoted a sergeant in the Green Berets division and ready for duty in Vietnam alongside other soldiers. But, he has another distinction with other normal special forces. The scene when Sergeant Muldoon wake up all of the soldiers for a tour to South Vietnam, Muldoon sees Peterson's room that has several items and furniture all decorated. The wooden wine box, nude posters, baseball bat & glove, guitar & ukulele, deer horn, flower curtain and rocking chair are all parts in Peterson's room decoration. Peterson creates an image of the "Hippies" culture that effects the baby boomer

generation in the 1960s.⁷ The decorations shows the Hippies theme such as sexual freedom, rock and roll music, the occult is all depicts as a young emergence culture.⁸ This Hippies culture is one of the major anti-Vietnam War groups who refuses to cooperate with the U.S. government. However, the film depicts the hippies as one of the significant supporting character. The film explains the role further as having a kind-heart and strong relationship with the South Vietnamese civilians. The film depicts hippies that can become a great soldiers who keep peace for the country that needs help. This is one of the the message that The Green Berets tries to persuade the hippies group to enlist as a soldier. Despite the hippies, comedic and cunning images, Peterson has another significant role which will be elaborated later in several scenes.

All of Colonel Kirby's team arrive in Da Nang, South Vietnam and on their way to the base camp. Shortly after they landed, Kirby is welcome by Colonel Morgan (Bruce Cabot) [US commander in South Vietnam] and Colonel Cai (Jack Soo) [South Vietnamese commander]. Two main characters meet again, but this time in South Vietnam and they have the same route. Beckworth greet Kirby and tell him that he wants to go along to see the camp. Kirby does not want him to go at first, but Beckworth challenges him that "my paper believes we shouldn't be in Vietnam. Afraid I'll see something to substantiate that belief?" Beckworth represents the civilian and press again about the disapproval of war in Vietnam. To prove that, Beckworth goes to the war zone alongside the Green Berets to write what he sees in the battlefield.

After all, George Backworth, Colonel Kirby and his team depart from the South Vietnam airbase. They all meet with Captain Coleman (Jason Evers), the commander of the camp who will be replaced after Kirby arrives. Another supporting South Vietnamese character represents again as an ally counterpart, the second one after Colonel Cai, his name is Captain Nim (George Takei). Kirby meet with Nim after he comes back from a long patrol. Captain Nim has a significant question in his mind, after he introduces himself to the new commander and captain who just arrive at the camp, he asked them:

⁷ John Moretta, *The Hippies: A 1960s History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2017); Baby Boomer is the demographic term of increase birth rate in the United States and elsewhere after the World War II.

⁸ Ibid.

Captain Nim: When you leave, Dai Uy [Captain, usually used in Vietnam War]?

Captain Coleman: Tomorrow hopefully. Da Nang, Nha Trang, Saigon and home!

Captain Nim: My home is in Hanoi. I will go home too someday. You see? First, kill all thinking Cong. Then go home. Will there be anything else?

Colonel Kirby: That's all, Nim.

Captain Nim's character depicts the South Vietnamese perspective in the film that he would do anything to get home. Viet Cong or the communist enemy is the largest obstacle that prohibit him and other South Vietnamese from their homeland. The dialogue significantly represents that the South Vietnamese are intrude by the North and they need military assistance from the United States.

Another crucial scene about America and South Vietnam is when Sergeant Muldoon captures a Viet Cong spy who measures the area around the camp. Muldoon invite Colonel Kirby and Captain Nim to investigate the soldier. Nim later finds an American lighter and believes that the captured Viet Cong kills one of his friend which is a medical specialist. Nim torture and kill that Viet Cong without any dissuasion from Kirby. Newspaper reporter George Beckworth warns Kirby that what Nim does is wrong and the colonel is the one who initiates the inquisition. Kirby explains everything in detail that the Viet Cong behead the medical specialist and mutilate the body. What Captain Nim does is nothing but justice in Kirby's opinion. Beckworth unable to say anything and still shock about the situation. The scene both shows the same unity as the previous mentioned scene and also describes the Viet Cong as a savage-being that conduct more brutality than what the Americans do to them.

Captain Nim is not the only character that represents the South Vietnamese. Nim is only portrays as a South Vietnam soldier. But, there is another character that represents the South Vietnamese civilian. At the camp, Peterson is on his duty and he get trick by a South Vietnamese orphan named Hamchunk. He is described by another soldier that he is a permanent fixture here because he is an orphan who lives with missionaries near the camp. Later, those missionaries get assassinated and Hamchunk has no place to go. Peterson finds out that Hamchunk does not have a place to sleep and

invite the little boy to sleep at his bed. Hamchunk is touched by Peterson's generosity and goes to bed while hugging Peterson like he is his father. As mentioned before in the role of hippies in Vietnam, the bond between Peterson and Hamchunk strongly represents the good relationship between American soldiers and South Vietnamese people. The scene also depicts the close facial expression shots between two characters to emphasize the concern that they have for each other.

The South Vietnamese civilians are majorly portrayed again when the chieftain of the village come to the U.S. Camp to ask for help because his granddaughter steps on a punji stick.⁹ This is another scene that emphasizes the American's kindness towards South Vietnamese civilians and blame the savagery towards the Viet Cong. First, the American kindness is seen when George Beckworth is the one that carries the chieftain's granddaughter to the doctor. Beckworth later gives his necklace to the little girl because he wants to provide any possible help to cure her injury. Also, the American medical specialist tries to cure and protect them by inviting all of the civilians into the camp for safety from the Viet Cong. Second, the chieftain encounters Colonel Kirby and told him about the Viet Cong's cruelty. Kirby responds that he will escort all of the villagers into the camp at sunrise. The cruel depiction does not stop at only what the chieftain claims. When Kirby and his team arrives at the village, they discover that the village is burn down to ashes. Most of the villagers get killed, the few survivors question by Captain Nim about the story behind the disaster.

The next scene depicts the war at the U.S. camp. The battle later breaks out and the Viet Cong kills and steals the weapons, clothes, equipment from the dead enemy soldiers. However, the Green Berets use the fighting plane technology to beat them. The aftermath scene, colonel Kirby's team strips the Viet Cong flag down as a sign of fight back, not giving up, and victory for the United States and South Vietnam. They get a victory at Vietnam, but they also need to win the people's opinion at home. The aftermath includes the most important depiction of news reporter George Beckworth. Colonel Kirby after strips down the Viet Cong flag, he talks with George Beckworth when the fighting is over at the camp. Beckworth ask Colonel Kirby:

⁹ Jerry Krizan and Robert Dumond, *BAC SI: A Green Beret Medic's War in Vietnam* (Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2014); Punji stick is a sharpened piece of bamboo trap commonly use by Viet Cong.

George Beckworth: I guess it couldn't have been much worse. [referred to the casualties at the camp sight]

Colonel Kirby: We're still alive.

George Beckworth: So, what are we doing now?

Colonel Kirby: We keep doing our jobs. You got one to go back to haven't you? What are you going to say in your newspaper?

George Beckworth: If I say what I feel, I may be out of a job. [Kirby offers him a job but Beckworth refuse]. I can only do more good for you with a typewriter.

Beckworth grows a higher respect for the Green Berets and a tighter relationship with the South Vietnamese people. He also witnesses the Viet Cong's cruelty and realize that it is necessary to stop their action. Beckworth represents that the war journalist and other media reporters will possibly change their perspectives towards the U.S. soldiers because they witness the reality of war by themselves. The film later shifts to the U.S. camp in Vietnam where Colonel Kirby and his team get back from a battle. Colonel Cai and Colonel Morgan wait for Kirby to tell them about a secret plan of ending the war. They plan to use a female spy to trap the Viet Cong General Phan Son Ti who is the major leader of the Viet Cong operation in South Vietnam. After the trap is successful, Kirby's team will kidnap him for the negotiation of a ceasefire between the North and South. Kirby later acknowledge that the female spy is Cai's sister-in-law and she willing to sacrifice herself for vengeance towards the Viet Cong.

The female spy's ability to captivate the Viet Cong general profits the Green Berets plan to capture the target from his own facility. She sacrifices herself for this mission by sleeping with the general; but, she is also Colonel Cai's sister-in-law and he cannot accept her action. Kirby talks to Cai about forgiveness because she is the one that make this kidnap mission possible. Cai later embraces his sister-in-law spy that she is a brave woman, and there is nothing to forgive. The depiction shows the women's responsibility in war, they also fight along with men to resist the Communist force. They are equally brave and responsible for what they do, even if it terminates their future, self-respect or honor.

The final scene of the Green Berets depicts the escape of Colonel Kirby and his team back to the U.S. military base camp in Da Nang, South Vietnam. The Viet Cong general has been kidnapped successfully and Kirby is on their way out of the jungle which is full of Viet Cong that are trying to get their general back. Kirby's team go through the jungle to wait for the chopper to pick them up at the meeting point. While they are walking to the point, Peterson who volunteers to get the point [the first person to lead the patrol], instantly kill by an enemies' booby-trap. Kirby has no choice but to leave Peterson's body behind. When Kirby arrives at the camp, Beckworth and Hamchunk are waiting at the landing area for the team to come back from the mission. Beckworth is going to another war area, but Hamchunk is waiting for Peterson. At that moment Hamchunk realizes that Peterson does not come back with the other soldiers. Kirby is the one that go to Hamchunk and talk to him about Peterson's death. Hamchunk cannot handle the truth and run to the seashore. Kirby follows Hamchunk to console him from his grief. The conversation between Kirby and Hamchunk is the significant point that compile the purpose of The Green Berets film:

Colonel Kirby: Hamchunk, you always knew what could happen, didn't you?

Hamchunk: But, I didn't want it to.

Colonel Kirby: None of us did.

Hamchunk: Is my Peterson brave?

Colonel Kirby: He is very brave. Are you going to be?

Hamchunk: I'll try.

Colonel Kirby: I know you will. And I'm sure that your Peterson wants you to have that.

[Kirby put the green beret on Hamchunk's head]

Hamchunk: What will happen to me now?

Colonel Kirby: You let me worry about that "Green Beret". You're what this is all about.

The conversation has a mixture of messages that the film concludes for the audience. First, the military ideology of bravery and sacrifice is depicted when Peterson gets kill by the Viet Cong's trap. The soldiers die during their missions which are

possible to happen to anyone in the battlefield. Kirby and Hamchunk both acknowledge the consequence when the soldiers take the risk to fight for their country. The scene refers to the important role of a fallen American soldier Peterson, an American Green Beret who always takes care of South Vietnamese orphan like Hamchunk. The bravery of Peterson is a symbol of how American soldiers risks their lives to take care of the South Vietnamese people.

Second, Hamchunk, is aggrieved when he know about Peterson's life end in tragedy. It shows that the South Vietnamese people forge a strong bond with the American soldiers throughout the war. When Kirby asks Hamchunk that will he be brave without Peterson? Hamchunk said he'll try. The conversation portrays that the war needs South Vietnamese people to fight for their own country alongside Americans. The U.S. cannot win the war by themselves, nor the South Vietnamese, unless they both work together and fight alongside each other.

Third, Kirby putting the Green Beret on Hamchunk's head is another sign of unity for both democratic countries. Hamchunk does not take the beret off, but he asks what will happen when Peterson is not there to take care of him. What will happen if the United States does not unite with South Vietnam and protect them from communist insurgency? Kirby answers back by telling that it is a Green Berets' responsibility that the United States should worry about Vietnam. The Green Berets mainly focuses on Vietnam, so they are going to do their job to protect the South Vietnamese people. He confirms it again by saying "You're what this is all about", he encourages Hamchunk that the Green Berets will not have any South Vietnamese behind. In another possible definition for the last sentences is to explain why the U.S. government decides to go to war against Viet Cong. The reason explains the same way as the government's proposal, "to keep the people of Vietnam out of communist thread and fight for peace in Indochina".¹⁰ That's what the Green Berets' goal is all about, to fight honorably for the democratic people from all over the world.

The film ends with the Ballad of Green Berets (1966), the same song as the opening credit. The song is played after Colonel Kirby walk with Hamchunk alongside the seashore in Da Nang U.S. base camp. The Ballad of the Green Berets concludes the

¹⁰ James E. Westheider, *The Vietnam War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007).

films depiction into the lyrics after the film reaches to the final scene. The song mentions, “The best American men with silver wings on their chests are the Green Berets who fight night and day until the end. The training of Green Berets is tough and include every aspect of combat. At last they will pass on to another generation by putting on silver wings to their sons’ chests.”¹¹ The film depicts the fight of Green Berets through night and day, and included hand-to-hand, guerrilla, conventional combats. They also pass the honor of Green Berets from Peterson to Hamchunk. The last scene is seen as the transition of Green Beret’s duty from one generation to another.

‘The Green Berets’ convinces the audiences who watch it to appreciate the U.S. military duty. The film tries to justify that those military actions prevent the communist insurgencies to spread to democratic countries. Those actions are bigger than the war in Vietnam; it is a heroic act in that they are willing to stop communism. Even though it is difficult to deal with the situation in Vietnam, the film indirectly depicts a promise to the audience by portraying the unity of the Americans and South Vietnamese that can lead to a victory. Despite the higher casualties, the film produces images of American soldiers that are willing to sacrifice their lives for their duties.

4.1.3 The Visitors (1972)

‘The Visitors’ is the last film during the American involvement in Vietnam. The film has an anti-war messages insert in the story of American veterans and their sufferings in Vietnam War. The film starts with the lead character, Bill Schmidt (James Woods) and Martha Wayne (Patricia Joyce), the husband and wife living on their peaceful farm with their son in winter time. It is a warming atmosphere in the house with everybody loving each other. There is another smaller house near Bill and Martha’s house which is where Martha’s father lives. Her father is Harry Wayne (Patrick McVey), a writer who is always busy with his work.

On a particular day, a car park outside of the house reveals that there are two visitors claim that they have served in the military service with the same platoon as Bill did in Vietnam. Two of Bill’s friends are Mike Nickerson (Steve Railsback) and Tony Rodriguez (Chico Martínez). They come to greet Martha, so she invites them into the

¹¹ Hillstrom and Hillstrom, *The Vietnam Experience*.

house. Later, the visitors meet Bill, so he invites them for breakfast in the house. The conversation at breakfast starts to explain the story behind these war veterans:

Mike Nickerson: Looks like you have stacked up rich. How many acres have you got?

Bill Schmidt: Hundred and seventy. But it is mostly from Martha's father, we just stay like caretakers. As a free rent.

Mike Nickerson: What kind of job have you got?

Bill Schmidt: Oh, I am in planting here. Basically use the helicopter.

[Both Mike and Tony were laughing at Bill's job and how he ended up being a planter]

Bill Schmidt: Yeah I-I-I know that's funny. I had the same job that we used in Vietnam. I swear to not go near the army again and had nothing to do with it.

After unveiling that the place is all own by Martha's father and Bill as a veteran cannot afford the house by himself, he mentions about the job that he choose to do after coming back from war. The use of a helicopter for plantation is a similar job for Bill and his friends in the army on their call of duty in Vietnam. Bill tries to talk about the infamous action of them in killing other human beings by using the helicopter. But, he choose to keep the tragic story with himself.

Bill Schmidt who is a pilot in the war, carries guilt about causing the death to Vietnamese people. Bill uses his skill in planting instead of herbicide by using the helicopter. He does not want to take part in the army by using helicopter for killing anymore. Bill proves that it will be better to stay out of what happen in Vietnam and not repeat the same experience.

Despite Bill's decision on his helicopter work, Mike and Tony do not truly care about the answer. Mike later asks for a short sleep on the sofa, and Tony go out with Bill to take a walk around the house. The story reveals that Mike and Tony are both convicted soldiers who face jail time after the war. Bill is the one who expose the story that cause his friends to testify at the trial of a court martial. Tony tell Bill not to worry about them, they just come to see their old friends. He also say that Mike and him already forgive Bill on his action that causes them a jail sentence.

The scene shifts to the house where Mike wake up and asks Martha about the location of the bathroom. Mike go upstairs and observes the entire floor before he come down to talk with Martha. Mike and Martha starts the conversation about the war in Vietnam:

[Martha noticed Mike is standing at the kitchen room door]

Martha Wayne: You scared me... You were in Vietnam with Bill? What is it like?

Mike Nickerson: You watch television?

Martha Wayne: Sometimes.

Mike Nickerson: Well...it is just like on television.

The conversation is a normal question out of Martha's curiosity, but Mike's answer makes it more towards an intensive topic. Martha wants to know what it is like in Vietnam and she heard that it is a nice place, so she asks Mike to confirm it. However, Mike responds that it is the same as on television and nobody is fond with it. What Mike says is more a reference to the cruelty of war that nobody wants to witness. Mike's words is the point that the director wants to duplicate the reality into film. The American people know about the war the same as Mike and the media (television in the film) emphasizes the cruelty of it to pressure the U.S. government's action in Vietnam.

Martha later invites Mike and Tony to go to talk about their combat experiences with her father at another house. Martha's father, Harry has served as an American soldier, a sergeant in World War II. He speaks about the World War II experience that is more difficult to fight because of the lower technology. He adds that American soldiers only have fists, a rifle and a bayonet, and they have to fight with limited weaponry in order to survive. Harry furthers the story-telling by saying how tough his enemies are, and he believes that the Vietnam War does not have the same impact as World War II. He said:

Harry Wayne: I admired them [The Japanese] though, I don't think these Cong, North Vietnamese or whatever the hell they are have the guts the Japs [slang for Japanese people] did.

Bill Schmidt: Whatever the hell they are, they keep on fighting.

Tony Rodriguez: Over there [Vietnam], you don't know who your friend is and who is not. There were no signs or you made up your own.

Bill Schmidt: So in the end, you gonna shoot everybody.

Harry and Bill brag about each other's war experience. But, the major point of the conversation is Bill's response about the nature of Viet Cong and the difficulty to recognize them from other Vietnamese civilians. It is the major issue for the American soldiers to defend themselves if they do not know which ones were their enemies. Bill said that American soldiers had no chance to protect themselves, so they would need to kill every Vietnamese for their own safety.

The next scene, Martha asks Bill while they were alone about what happened in Vietnam. Bill said that Mike found a 15-16 years old girl in the last hut and pretended that she is a Viet Cong. Bill's patrol took the girl with them and abused her by taking turns raping her, one after the other. Bill could not do it, and later felt that he should testify against his own patrol at the court. It is the first time that Bill tells the entire story to Martha and she is more than supportive of Bill's actions.

Bill furthers his confession about testifying against his friend's action at war, and that he should not have exposed them to a court martial. He regrets his action because what his friends did is quite a common activity for both sides of the war in Vietnam. Bill believes that the abduction and sexual violence towards innocent Vietnamese villagers are conducted by the Viet Cong every day, and everywhere. He could not find the point of punishing his friends. This confession about Bill's regret is an example of why the truth about the Vietnam War does not expose to the American public for many years. The veterans like Bill believes that sexual violence is a usual activity in Vietnam. The soldiers blame the sexual violence on the war; they believe that war and violence could not be separated. So, it is not necessary to bring the ugly truth about sexual abuse to discredit the veterans legacy. But, Bill did it because he believed that it should not happen again to anyone, even in war time.

After Bill tells the story to Martha, every characters are all come back at the house. All of the men, including Harry, Mike and Tony, invite Bill to watch an American football game with them in the living room. While they are watching the American football match, Harry starts comparing the war to American football:

Harry Wayne: [American] Football is a great game... but it also causes us a conflict. That's what life is about. Is not it? It is life against death. Like in Vietnam, you see just one corner of it above the surface.

Bill Schmidt: You're missing your metaphor, Harry.

Harry Wayne: Look at the football field, one team got one color jersey, another got another color. See as you can see. But, the world set up the way, communist on one side and the rest on the other. You faced that, look at Vietnam and its context to understand it. Right now Europe is stabilized, power shifting in Asia and Vietnam is a focal point of it.

Harry compares the American Football match to soldiers' lives and conflict that they have to face. However, the government and the army are not giving every piece of information to the soldiers. They only assign the soldiers to eliminate the enemies that had a different regime. For the world at war, it is the same paths as a football match. Harry compares the two American football teams that are playing against each other. The way to know the difference for both players and audience is the color of the jersey. You should be able to know the difference between communist and democratic countries. You should know who the real enemies are and fight them. Vietnam is also another supporting point of American's goal to eliminate the communist enemy. A civilian who had experience as a veteran like Harry, believes that it is the duty of American soldiers to deal with communism in Vietnam because the government told them to do so. However, Harry does not confirm that it is the right decision by the U.S. government and the army. Mike, Tony and Bill listen to what Harry said and sit silently thinking about the war. Mike said those points that Harry made are the things that the army told them. The army told them to believe the same way, to eliminate the enemy as much as they could. It is a brainwash system that change the soldiers into killing machines. Bill also added "and you better believe it, soldier", which he intends to impersonate what the higher-rank soldiers said in order to brainwash the lower-rank soldiers. It is a military order that led them to war in Vietnam and the soldier who disobeyed that would be punished.

The American football game comparison does not end only about the jersey colors between two sides. Bill further his point by questioning the ethnicity of the American football athletes that play in the television. He notices that they are only Caucasian and African American players with no other races. Bill specifies that there are no Puerto Rican football players, compare to baseball where plenty of Puerto Ricans in the Major League. Harry replies back that Puerto Ricans are too small to play football. Tony is furious about Harry's answer about the size of Puerto Ricans people. He believes that the United States should not have any racial discrimination, the same way as the American soldiers need to be treated equally in the army.

Harry tries to calm Tony down by starting a new conversation and using another example of American football. He talks about his youthful experience in that everybody wants to play American football at college. He mentions that the college men's desire to play this sport is because they would get as many women as they wished. Harry believes that men dominate the game of football the same way as they lead the world. Men in Harry's idea are leaders, a patriot and a hero for their country more than women do. He further comments about men being a stronger gender, and he believes that Bill does not act as manly as he should have. He also believes that Bill is a coward at war when he tries to mock him before at the World War II-Vietnam War argument scene at Harry's house. Harry is an interesting old man whose character despise the role of women in society and believed that men should treat women as sexual objects.

Harry later convince Mike and Tony to stay for the night because he feels a bond with Bill's friends. Martha who already know about Mike and Tony's action in Vietnam does not want them to stay long. She does not want them to cause any unfortunate actions towards her family. Bill and Martha do not have a choice because Harry already invites the visitors to stay at the house.

Further from the previous scene, Harry still enjoys talking with Mike and Tony in the living room where they watch football together. Harry still expresses his feeling that he does not like Bill because of his weirdness. Harry later asks what happened in Vietnam between Mike and Bill. Mike confesses the tragic story to Harry in his own perspective:

Harry Wayne: What happened [in Vietnam]?

Mike Nickerson: It is late in the patrol. We had a woman, Viet Cong. We had to took her on a patrol with us and Bill turned us in.

Harry Wayne: He turned you in for that?

Mike Nickerson: Well yeah, we had a little fun with her first. But Bill didn't even touch her.

Harry Wayne: I always thought he is half queer... I is surprised you didn't slit his throat.

Mike Nickerson: I thought about it. Thought about it a lot when I is in a stockade [military prison]. Then what is it gonna get me, huh?

The conversation make Harry understand more of the reason why Mike and Tony decide to visit Bill. This gives a significant point of Harry's character because he supports Mike and Tony more than Bill, his own son-in-law. Harry does not condemn Mike on what he did in Vietnam, he embraces him as a manly war hero. Harry's expression is totally different from Martha. He believes that there is nothing wrong in conducting sexual violence in war. His doubt on Bill as a queer is more convincing because Mike tells him about how Bill did not take part in the Vietnamese rape patrol. Harry is more surprises at Bill's action that exposed all of the patrol and sent his friends to the stockade.

In the house, all four of them talk to each other separately while Harry decides to go back to his own house. Bill talks with Tony about finding a job and Mike talks with Martha about her father as a writer. Later, Martha asks Mike if what Bill said about his sexual violence interaction with the Vietnamese girl is true. The story gets more intense and both Mike and Martha tries to argue with each other. Mike justify the target as a Viet Cong woman and there is no difference between the Viet Cong and the local villagers. They all dressed the same, acted the same and even spoke the same language. Mike said he did not want to take any risk, so he needed to abduct her. Martha still disagrees with Mike's action towards that Vietnamese woman. She believes that Mike conducts violence to satisfy himself and his friends. Mike explains more that the war could justify his action because the villagers in Vietnam were also the American soldiers worst enemy. Elders, women and children were all possible to be a Viet Cong's spy. He mentions that these villagers caused his friends to die and also to be heavily

wounded in the war. What he did is one of the ways to deal with the enemy, he did it for his country, not different than any other veterans. Mike also says that it is difficult to explain what the war could cause you to do physically and mentally. The civilians back at home should appreciate what the soldiers did in Vietnam. Martha is lost for words and understand that it is hard to imagine what has happened in war if you do not go to Vietnam by yourself.

Mike then invites her for a dance in the room full with music from the radio. Martha accepts the dance and Mike seduces her to make Bill angry. Bill later sees what happens and gets into a fight with Mike. This marks the most intense scene of the film. It shows Mike and Tony's purpose of visiting Bill in the middle of winter. The fight breaks out between Mike and Bill in front of the house. Tony is the one that keeps Martha away from stopping the fight. He beats up Bill by smacking Bill's head on the stone until he become unconscious. Mike comes into the house to help Tony catch Martha until they square her into the bedroom. The rape scene only appears as a dark picture in the room with the sound of Martha suffering from the sexual violence. At that time, Bill is still in an unconscious status in front of the house. The scene marks the climax of justifying American veterans when they tries to blend in with the civilian society and how they bring the horror of war back home.

The rape scene continues when Mike comes down to wait at the car and lets Tony rape Martha after him. Tony then goes up in to the house to rape Martha. Martha begs Tony not to abuse her anymore, Tony denies and says that Martha could not change the rules of the nature. He justifies the sexual abuse as a nature of male's actions towards females. Tony uses his so-called "rules of nature" as an excuse of men being a stronger gender that can do anything towards women. However, Tony is not as straight forward on rape revenge as Mike's character. He only supports Mike's action and follows the sexual violence that his friend did. Tony uses men environment as a path of conducting sexual violence.

Despite the environment that takes part in influencing rape culture for males [Tony], there are other possibilities that can lead to the sexual violence. Especially war veterans, they suffer from the horrors of war before and can get influenced by it. Mike's behavior is not only affect by the environment. He already speaks about his goal to Harry that he will kill Bill if necessary. His desire for revenge has been with him since

he went to the stockade. Therefore, the environment plays only a small influence of Mike's intention on conducting violence.

While Tony abuses Martha, Mike lay himself down on the radiator bonnet in the cold winter night. He thinks about what he did to Martha and what he did at war. Mike's war memory shows the changing scene through his eyes in Vietnam. The imagination of Mike shows the nostalgic memory of him chasing the young Vietnamese woman in the jungle. The helpless Vietnamese woman ran away and looked for help in the tall grass. The girl later reached a dead end and did not know where else to go. She begged for her freedom continuously but Mike did not stop from walking towards the woman. When the chasing of the Vietnamese woman memory ends, Mike looks up at the tall tree near the place he closes his eyes and the sound of helicopter still follows him. It is a sign of war horror that is deeply embed into the veteran's memory. The scene emerges between Mike's rapes at war and back at United States to provoke the mental problems in Vietnam War veterans. Mike's psycho personality and gesture (silent, rage, insomniacs and loves violence) also portrays the veterans that suffer war trauma which leads him to rape culture.

After Mike's flashback ends, Tony has just finished abusing Martha and he is ready to leave with Mike. The visitors get in the car and leave with the smile on their face as they already fulfill their revenge on Bill. At the same time, Bill comes in to the house and tries to recover his consciousness from the fight with Mike. Martha come down the stairs silently after she get sexually abused by the visitors. Bill and Martha meet each other again in the dark living room with low lights from the front door. Martha sit silently opposite to Bill. Bill asks her, "Are you alright?", but she does not answer back.

This is the final scene of the film, and it depicts the opposite side of sexual violence. The previous scene portrays the veterans' sub-consciousness after the war, but this scene depicts the American civilian who is the victim of a veteran's violent mindset. The violence causes the civilian to mentally change because they are a victim of war veterans. Martha who is a talkative woman has changed into a different person after she got raped. She does not talk or ask as much as in the earlier scenes throughout the film. She is quiet and ignores Bill's question after they meet in the living room. Martha's change is the major example of how the victim suffers from the violence

carried out by the veterans who are traumatized by the war. The PTSD and post-Vietnam syndrome have the possibility to affect the civilians who has never been to war before. The *Visitors* film emphasizes that the U.S. government does not acknowledge the risk of their own citizens when they launched into war in Vietnam. The government underestimates the mental issue that follows the veterans.

This section provides an analysis of hidden messages in the film elements, showing how these war films contain implicit political message towards the U.S. war policies in Vietnam. ‘*To The Shores of Hell*’ and ‘*The Green Berets*’ champion the idea that the U.S. government decisions are based around getting rid of communism in Vietnam. These two films support the U.S. government in stopping the communist regime and the brutality caused by the North Vietnamese guerrilla soldiers. However, ‘*The Visitors*’ chooses to depict the negative experience that traumatized the American soldiers both mentally and physically. The film suggests that U.S. government is the entity that led American soldiers to suffer in Vietnam. They also develop a mindset that violence is normal and justified. The textual analysis allows us to understand this aspect of war normalization.

4.2 Textual Analysis of the Pro-War Films

The textual analysis section links the overview of plots, dialogues, and other audio-visual elements with rhetorical and political discourses. The analysis clarifies how each pro-war film uses symbols, narratives and images to purposely reinforce the government’s war policies. There are similarities and differences in each pro-war film’s discourses which will be elaborated on to understand pro-4.2.1 war film’s distinction. Moreover, the anti-war film is analyzed as a comparative example of how anti-war films produce messages unfavorable for militarism.

4.2.1 Nationalism

The first political discourse is ‘nationalism’, which is significant for war films that try to unite people in a country. Nationalism is an inward looking perspective that leads the audience to focus on defining themselves as a proud citizen of their own

country.¹² Nationalism is a discourse that has been used to promote U.S. citizens as a peaceful democratic people who conform to the demonization and civilizational superiority discourses. Nationalism is different from patriotism in that it only promotes pride and dignity but is not used to compare other discourses. So, nationalism in cinema contains distinctive images between the domestic and foreign groups of audience. U.S. nationalism offers the necessary justification for U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, i.e., the U.S. government distinctly dividing democratic people from communists. The democratic people have to defend themselves from the communists, who can lead them to ruin. The idea of being a democratic group united against foreign intervention must include defining the South Vietnamese as part of the democratic nation that requires military assistance from the United States, the leader of the “free world”, to truly justify U.S. involvement.

Nationalism is one of the core discourses in Hollywood war films, which can be traced back to the World War II period. The World War II films, such as ‘Back to Bataan’ (1942), ‘Casablanca’ (1943) and ‘The Fighting Sullivan’s’ (1944) fully contained nationalism. These World War II films are described as films that provided an American hero who the American people can identify with, and root for.¹³ The films also show nationalism and victorious images in order to promote the success of American soldiers at war. The Hollywood nationalism passes on the same content in World War II films to Vietnam War films, but the fact that the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War was unsuccessful makes it difficult for the Hollywood filmmakers to fully express nationalism in their films.

Similar usage of nationalism can be seen in how these films depict the heroic actions of the main characters in multiple scenes throughout the story. In ‘To the Shores of Hell’, the main protagonist Gregg Donahue, a marine, recruits other people from various professions and nationalities to rescue his own brother from the Viet Cong. Donahue bravely fights against the enemy and is able to succeed in his mission with the other democratic characters that go on the same patrol with him. This heroism

¹² Alan Williams, *Film and Nationalism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

¹³ Breanna Fehlman, “World War II Films and Patriotism in America” (History Class Publication, Ouachita Baptist University, February 4, 2015).

shows parts of not leaving any American people behind, even when they are in the middle of the enemy's headquarters. The depiction enhances the idea that people should be proud to be American because they are brave, strong and believe in democratic principles. Similar heroic depictions that emphasize nationalism can be seen in 'The Green Berets'. The film depicts the heroic Green Berets special forces deployed to Vietnam to participate in an intense battle against the communist Viet Cong. The Green Berets have faith in the government's decision and align themselves with the South Vietnamese soldiers to unite the democratic forces against the communist threat.

The nationalist undertone of the two pro-war films are further symbolized in the film's background music along with military training scenes. The patriotic music of both films pays homage to the American military fighting in the Vietnam War and it imprints what the military has done for the country and encourages civilians to acknowledge their military's service. In 'To the Shores of Hell', real footage of U.S. marines in action in combination with the Marine's Hymn¹⁴ at both the start and end of the film. The music in this film creates a feeling of gratitude towards the marines which is later depicted in the story. After the main character fulfils his mission near the end of the film, the music reminds the audience about the significance of the marines being in Vietnam. 'To the Shores of Hell' tries to empathize with the marines' actions as one of the objectives that follow the U.S. war policies. Moreover, the film encourages the American people to support those policies because it is the national responsibility to assist democratic countries at war. The film's musical impact is similar to the one in 'The Green Berets'. That film uses the Ballad of The Green Berets¹⁵, a military anthem played in both the opening and ending scenes, which also depicts military action. The music and scenes are intended to instill appreciation in the audience of the U.S. Special Forces' actions in Vietnam. These films show a pro-war perspective that inserts nationalism by using music as a symbol signifying the government's determination to win the war with the public supporting them.

While 'To the Shores of Hell' and the 'The Green Berets' use nationalist discourses similarly, they possess different film elements to reinforce nationalism is

¹⁴ Alvarez, *Parris Island*.

¹⁵ Hillstrom and Hillstrom. *The Vietnam Experience*.

depicted through discourse. These films define nationalism at different scales and interpret the film narratives differently. In 'To the Shores of Hell', the scale of the film is small and focuses only on a small military-rescuing patrol throughout the entirety of the film. The film borrows family discourse central to American culture. The main character is presented as desperately looking for a way to rescue his brother. The family scale provides a nationalistic mindset by explaining that no American should be left behind. Furthermore, it stresses that every single American family is equally significant, and the military always provides a chance for family members to reunite. Moreover, the Viet Cong is the enemy that tries to destroy American families and therefore poses a threat against that American society.

'The Green Berets' depicts nationalism at a different scale compared to 'To the Shores of Hell'. The film portrays a larger scale of the war focusing on the American military as a whole. The film focuses on how patriotic Americans should deal with a democratic struggle worldwide. The film emphasizes the importance of military assistance to South Vietnam and the democratic military power of the United States. The macroscope of 'The Green Berets' depicts the full confrontation between the United States and the Viet Cong. The result, in the film, is the U.S.-South Vietnam military alliance always comes out on top as victorious. The macro-level of the film depictions provide a significant image of how democratic power can contain communist interventions. It also promotes the necessity of good relations between the U.S. and South Vietnam. Therefore, American nationalism is premised on democratic regime prevailing over communist regime, who was attempting to occupy Vietnam. This discourse promotes American democracy and suggests that Vietnam should democratize their political regime. In order for a democratic regime to be established in Vietnam, the American soldiers needed to enter the war and eliminate the communist enemies. The American soldiers symbolized heroes who liberated the Vietnamese people from an atrocious regime. Accordingly, the American military is the main focus of the large scale war depiction. In the film, the American military gets criticized by the American public and press media, as film shows, those critics realize the necessity of the war and later support the military's action. The dialogue provides a solution of winning the war by suggesting that the unity of American people is the power that drives the success of the country's involvement in Vietnam. This message injects a

nationalist approach that sentiment the audience to support the U.S. government and military.

4.2.2 Demonization of Enemies

Demonization is one of the discourses that pro-war films often use to justify the killing of the enemy. The pro-war film portrayals use negative images of enemies; the longer and more protracted conflict has become, the more demonization towards opponents will occur.¹⁶ The demonization provides a fearful attitude, the need to destroy the demonic enemy to prevent them from harming peaceful people. In Hollywood pro-war films, this discourse reveals that it is necessary for Americans to overcome the fear of demons and fight against the enemy to protect their own country or the third party country that needs U.S. assistance.

Demonization is linked with nationalist discourse, previously explained, as it creates an “us” versus “them” dichotomy, i.e., depicting domestic forces against a foreign group. Nationalist discourse tries to communicate with the domestic target by creating a powerful image of their country. In this case, the Hollywood pro-war films represent positive aspects of the United States and persuade the audience to appreciate their country’s actions. The nationalist discourse also encourages U.S. involvement in the war and shows that the U.S. has immense power compared to the enemy. On the other hand, the demonization discourse seeks to depict demonic images of the enemies for the domestic audience to view. The demonic depictions justify killings of those demonic enemies. Hollywood pro-war films have also used this discourse to justify U.S. soldiers’ violent actions towards their opponent.

For the Hollywood film industry, wars were useful content for generating an antagonist image of demonized enemy. Similar to the nationalist discourse, the demonization discourse is not new for Hollywood war films. Demonization discourse had been used in the World War II pro-war films to taint the image of the Japanese empire.¹⁷ Hollywood films often use the Pacific war theatre, especially the Pearl Harbor

¹⁶ Nahi Alon and Haim Omer, *The Psychology of Demonization: Promoting Acceptance and Reducing Conflict* (Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 2006).

¹⁷ Phillip L. Gianos, *Politics and Politicians in American Film* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999).

attack to justify the American army fighting back and participating in World War II's Pacific front.¹⁸ This demonization of the Japanese troops also gathered public support in the fight against Japan. The demonization discourse in Hollywood pro-war films was carried over to the Vietnam War period with the same intention, to demonize the enemy. However, similar to the use of nationalist discourse, the feedback from the public was different because the U.S.' involvement was unsuccessful in Vietnam.

'To the Shores of Hell' and 'The Green Berets' are the two pro-Vietnam War films that contain the demonization discourse within the film narratives. Both films support the idea that the United States needs to go to Vietnam and stop the demonic enemies from conducting more violence. The discourse used in the films often depicts the antagonist enemy as evil, savage, or barbarian as opposed to the main protagonist. Therefore, both films depict the protagonist as the United States soldiers and the antagonist as savage Viet Cong, evil guerrilla soldiers and the brainwashed evil communists.

In the two pro-Vietnam war films, this discourse not only justifies an American right to kill the Viet Cong, it also provides the right to be involved in the war against the enemy that occupies democratic territory. In 'To the Shores of Hell', there are multiple depictions of the Viet Cong's evil actions against American and South Vietnamese people. The first introduction of the Viet Cong is described by the main protagonist as a demonic group that loves violence and torturing innocent civilians. The protagonist group also shares their personal experiences about the Viet Cong's savage actions, which are unacceptable for them. The demonic, savage and barbaric depiction goes further in the film when the American soldiers encounter Viet Cong guerrillas throughout the rescue mission. The Viet Cong are depicted as a group that has raped innocent South Vietnamese women and ambushed the American patrol near an occupied area. The film shows that the Viet Cong uses violence indiscriminately against every gender and age. This portrayal signifies that the Viet Cong's wide ranging violence is normal for the "savage".

¹⁸ Ralph Donald, *Hollywood Enlists!: Propaganda Films of World War II* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017); The World War II films such as *Across the Pacific* (1942), *Air Force* (1943), *Destination Tokyo* (1944) were using the Japanese empire as their ultimate antagonist which contained demonic actions.

In 'The Green Berets', a similar discourse depicts the Viet Cong and their supporters as savage human beings that kill innocent civilians for fun. The Viet Cong guerrillas are depicted as a group that not only kills the opposing groups, but also burns down people's villages, steals clothes from dead bodies, rapes women, and kills children that do not know anything about the war. The dialogue by the main protagonist, Colonel Kirby, further acknowledges the Viet Cong's evil actions. He tells a story about the Viet Cong coming down to a village and engage in similar brutal actions. They continue to cause terrible damage everywhere. Both pro-Vietnam war films provide an image that emphasized hatred towards the American enemy. Furthermore, these depictions of the antagonist Viet Cong's behavior has justified the American soldiers' crusade against the demonic actions in Vietnam.

The second purpose of the discourse is revealed in the film narrative when a South Vietnamese spy infiltrates the Viet Cong's headquarters. The demonization discourse represents the communist threat in Vietnam and is presented through the violent mindset of their soldiers. The American soldiers act as the democratic leader that comes to Vietnam to demolish the spreading disease of communism. The film dialogues remind the audience of the purpose of American involvement, which does not only include stopping the Viet Cong's violence, but that Americans must also stop the communist regime advancing and committing further violence in Vietnam. The conversation in the Viet Cong first aid room between the captured American doctor Gary Donahue and Major Toang, a high-ranking Viet Cong officer signifies how the Viet Cong soldiers, as group of demonic human beings, need to be killed. At the same time, Toang's dialogue emphasizes how the Viet Cong army, from foot soldiers to generals, are all brainwashed by communism. The dialogue, therefore, provides anti-communist perspectives through the demonization of the opponent.

Similarly, 'The Green Berets'' narratives and dialogue introduce communist atrocity in the opening scenes, when the American Special Forces claim that the Viet Cong are sponsored militarily by communist countries, including the Soviet Union, Red China and Czechoslovakia. That communist military assistance provides an advantage for the Viet Cong in the fight against the South Vietnamese army. The dialogue also provides a message that supports the American soldiers who are fighting against the communists without any regret. The scene also shows that

although American civilians initially criticize the Green Berets' actions, they later realize that those special forces are doing their jobs in order to stop evil communism.

The similarity of these two pro-war films' demonization discourse is perceptible at two levels: the violence of the Viet Cong guerrillas and the evil regime of communism. These films encourage the American audience by portraying the negative images of the enemy as much as possible. So, the Americans can be justified as the heroic democratic leader that fights against an evil enemy. The demonization discourses in both films anticipate to unite the American civilians by supporting American involvement in Vietnam. The involvement is part of the U.S. government's war policy that tried to stop the communist domination of Asia. Therefore, the political messages supporting U.S. involvement is also hidden inside the demonization discourse.

4.2.3 Civilizational Superiority

Discourses demonstrating Western civilizational superiority convey a binary opposition between "us" the superior culture and "them" the uncivilized in connection with the previous demonization discourse. The demonization discourse focuses on violent actions by evil enemies that need to be contained by a peaceful protagonist. Civilizational superiority focuses on the moral 'us', or the protagonist as a hero, who diminishes the evil enemy based on their moral high ground. The process of civilizational superiority resembles colonialism, when the superior country tries to show their cultural supremacy over another. This civilizational superiority concept can be further understood in view of the Orientalism concept by Edward Said. The concept of Orientalism argues that Western civilization mirrors themselves as superior to the non-West. Western countries believe that non-Western countries are incapable of taking care of themselves because their behavior is lazy, irrational and violent.¹⁹ For the United States, Orientalist understanding has assisted the U.S. government in discovering methods to control non-Western countries.²⁰ Civilizational superiority discourses can be seen in the U.S. government's purpose in getting into Vietnam, which was to civilize the country. The U.S. sought to prove that Western Civilization was

¹⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985).

²⁰ Ibid.

superior and more advanced than other countries. The U.S. also believed that in order to be civilized, those countries needed to follow the right political regime, which is democracy. Vietnam was one of the targets that the U.S. government tried to turn into a democratic country and avoid uncivilized communist regimes.

In the Hollywood pro-war films, the civilizational superiority discourse can be seen in film elements. It reflects the moral high ground for Western civilization, whose moral democratic heroes fight against their evil enemies in order to bring about the democratic regime, peace and prosperity to the uncivilized Vietnam.

In 'To the Shores of Hell', the film displays Western democratic civilization as being more superior to the communist Viet Cong. The character portrayals provide the major difference between American soldiers and the Viet Cong in multiple scenes. First, the civilized democratic army is depicted in the introduction as the main protagonist. The film depicts how powerful organized military based on democratic principles can be. The civilizational differences are portrayed in later scenes when the protagonist patrols get ambushed by the Viet Cong guerrillas. The Viet Cong use bows and arrows, which are considered primitive and under-developed weapons. The film compares differences in military power and capabilities, which favors the American soldiers greatly. 'To the Shores of Hell' furthers the discourse by depicting the better medical advancement that the American doctor has. The supporting American character, Gary Donahue, introduces the medical capabilities of the Viet Cong, who are unable to find their own medical personnel. Furthermore, the location also plays part in emphasizing American superiority. The film depicts Vietnam as a destitute underdeveloped location. The rescuing scenes in the film portray Vietnam as harsh, with high humidity and being a low technological environment. The location encourages the audience to empathize with the difficulties the American soldiers had to bare in that underdeveloped terrain. This creates more appreciation for the U.S. Army.

The U.S. military power, medical power and location setting depict a country with democratic superiority can provide development assistance to an underdeveloped country in need. The representations also further the political messages by encouraging the audience to think that the U.S. civilizational power is far more

superior to the communist power introduced by the regime leaders in Asia.²¹ The discourse justifies U.S. involvement as the “White Man’s burden”²² concept that advocates aiding underdeveloped countries and leading them to prosperity. The discourse also paints the opponents as demonic human-beings that follow a communist regime that leads to underdevelopment. The film’s depiction is based on civilizational superiority. Therefore, it provides supporting messages for American involvement. The film shows the purpose of the U.S. government’s policies, which leads the American personnel to war to promote democracy and advance the development of Vietnam.

‘The Green Berets’ is another pro-Vietnam war film that has similar representations of the civilizational superiority discourse. In the film, democracy is described as key to having a good civilization. It points to the standards of civilization set by the United States amidst the Cold War. It is claimed that democracy is a universal value that promotes peace and prosperity for a country. Furthermore, a democratic leader encourages equality, which heightens a civilization of a country because every person in that country has equal rights and is protected equally by the law. The United States, therefore, defines communism as an anti-civilization regime because it limits people’s rights and allows authoritarian rule. Communism responds to specific elite groups and endorses violence that degrades a civilization. This idea of American civilization is depicted in the scene when the main protagonist, Colonel Kirby’s patrol engages in battle with Viet Cong soldiers trying to invade the U.S. military base camp. The differences in military strategies depicted in the scene shows American superior power. Despite the soldiers being outnumbered and being unfamiliar with the environment, the American soldiers are able to win the battle with their advanced strategy. The American superiority discourse is not only depicted in the film narrative, but it is portrayed in the film characters. In ‘The Green Berets’, American soldiers are

²¹ Burton I. Kaufman and Diane Kaufman, *Historical Dictionary of the Eisenhower Era* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009); The Communist leaders include countries that are a part of President Eisenhower’s root of Domino Theory that popularized from President Truman’s idea: Soviet Union (USSR), Red China, Korea, and later Vietnam.

²² William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2006); White Man’s Burden is a term used to justify Western Imperialism. According to the concept, white men are the group that should rule over the non-White people. The white men then rule the non-Whites to be more developed in terms of culture, economics, military and more. It is considered as a part of colonialism during the Western colonial era.

portrayed as saviors for South Vietnamese civilians. The American characters in the film provide medical aid for a young South Vietnamese girl and try to aid every villager that visits the camp built by America's South Vietnamese democratically. The American characters typify American involvement in Vietnam as positive; as they bring medical advancement. The relationship between the American soldier Sergeant Peterson and the South Vietnamese orphan Hamchunk confirms this narrative. Peterson always cares about Hamchunk and protects him from the Viet Cong's violent actions. Peterson makes Hamchunk believe that democracy can lead South Vietnam to peace by keeping him out of the communist regime. These American character portrayals are in binary opposition with the demonized Viet Cong. The American characters are always represented as having peaceful morals, being heroic and having a patriotic mindset. But, the Viet Cong characters have a completely different portrayal. The Viet Cong soldiers are always characterized as the ultimate antagonist, a demonic person who loves violence and a savage-subhuman who follows the evil communist regime.

The difference between 'To the Shores of Hell' and 'The Green Berets' stems from the civilizational superiority discourse depicting the South Vietnamese. 'To the Shores of Hell' only depicts South Vietnamese people as victims that cannot fight by themselves and do not have access to any advanced technology that could possibly improve their lives. The United States has to provide full democratic assistance to the South Vietnamese in order for them to fight against the communist Viet Cong. In contrast, 'The Green Berets' depicts the South Vietnamese as one of their allies that needs the United States to promote democracy and prove to every Vietnamese that communism is not the right regime to follow. The American soldiers endorse democracy by providing aid for the South Vietnamese army and civilians that desperately need their assistance. Therefore, the difference in the two pro-war films is the depiction of the South Vietnamese people and the American perceptions towards them.

The civilizational superiority in the pro-war films provides a positive illustration of American democracy. The films demonstrate that U.S. war policy can lead to the end of the Vietnam War and that democracy, not communism, should be the way forward. Both pro-war films emphasize that the U.S. engaged in the Vietnam War because communism leads countries in Asia to underdevelopment. The U.S.

government and military is the only superior democratic leader that will lead a country such as Vietnam to prosperity.

4.3 Textual Analysis of the Anti-War Films

The textual analysis of anti-war films during the Vietnam War allows for the decoding of symbols, narratives, and images in pro-war films. 'The Visitors' (1972) is the only anti-war film produced while the Vietnam War was ongoing and it contains anti-war political messages. It is also the only film that was made based on Vietnam War policies during the Nixon Administration. 'The Visitors' will be analyzed through the same analytical concept as the pro-war films ('To the Shores of Hell' and 'The Green Berets') in order to compare differences in each of them. 'The Visitors' film is linked with the Nixon Administration so the film's messages and the political impact shed a different light on the subject compared to the pro-war films linked with the Johnson Administration.

4.3.1 Anti-War Films on Nationalism

'The Visitors' (1972) is the sole anti-war film produced while the Vietnam War was ongoing, which had already caused multiple anti-war protests in the United States.²³ The film does not have a pro-nationalistic discourse. Moreover, it condemns this discourse, which attempts to persuade the audience to be proud to be American and that the war in Vietnam is necessary for the government to be involved with. 'The Visitors' portrays how nationalism had penetrated in American citizens' lives over a long period of time. The film discusses how nationalism was first been seen as Americans serving their country, fighting with honor and being a true patriot, but it later shifted to a negative reaction because of the outcome of the Vietnam War. The

²³ Marry S. Robbins, *Against the Vietnam War: Writings by Activists*, revised ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007); The outcry of the protests in the United States came in during Nixon's presidency from 1970-1972. The protests rose since Nixon's invasion in Cambodia, along with the Kent State shooting towards war-protesting students in 1970. Both incidents caused a higher rate of protests in United States every year until Nixon launched the withdrawal plan. The participants in these protests were not only civilians, but also the U.S. soldiers who came back from Vietnam which did not support the government's policy anymore.

nationalist discourse, therefore, will be defined to understand the shift of how film impacts American perspectives.

The first film element that reflects critical views toward nationalism is the characters. The characters include the Vietnam War veterans Bill, Mike and Tony, World War II veteran Harry, and American civilian Martha. All of the characters define nationalism in war time as a discourse that affects American people differently. Harry, the World War II veteran defines nationalism as a message that the U.S. government seeks to engrain into American soldiers. The duty that he did for the country in the war made him believe that nationalism is a powerful mind frame that should be carried on to Vietnam. He believes that he survived and won the war because he followed the orders of the military command. However, Vietnam is a different scenario and the outcome was different from World War II. Bill, Mike and Tony suffer different war experiences from Harry, which cause them to believe that nationalism does not work for them. They see nationalism as a propaganda tool that deceives young Americans into taking part as heroic soldiers in the war. The result has caused the veterans to realize that the U.S. government is only concerned about winning the war against communism, but does not truly focus on the negative effects on American soldiers. The characters explain that the Vietnam War caused a massive loss of American lives and the soldiers that survived become veterans infected with war trauma.

This critical outlook is not only inserted into characters, but in dialogues. The first dialogue is the American football analogy described by Harry when all the characters watch the football match together in the living room. Harry compares American football to the ongoing situation of the world. He believes that the Vietnam War provides stability for the world. Harry explains that American football is a great sport but also violent. He then compares it to the war that causes violence but is necessary for the world to be a better place. Harry promotes nationalism and that supporting the Vietnam War is a duty for American people. Despite the violence, it needs to be done. However, the Vietnam War veterans do not seem to support Harry's metaphor. Bill as one of the Vietnam War veterans, impersonates his commanding officers and says, "And you better believe it soldier", with the intention of discrediting Harry's promotion of nationalism. The Vietnam War veterans see nationalism as part of the brainwashing system of the U.S. government. They believe that wars torment

caused them and the service that the military promotes is only designed as a propaganda tool to get more American people enlisted.

‘The Visitors’ presents nationalism as a discourse that leads the American people to a tragic loss. The film represents a major difference in anti-war film compared to pro-war films. ‘The Visitors’ does not insert the nationalism discourse to persuade the audience to appreciate their own country, unlike the pro-war films did. The film instead criticised nationalism as a U.S. government war policy and it contends that American involvement in the war was a major mistake.

4.3.2 Demonization in Anti-War Film

The demonization discourse in the anti-war film is markedly different from the pro-war films. The intention of demonizing the enemy is not depicted in ‘The Visitors’. It instead portrays the problems of war which traumatize American veterans and the horrible impact this trauma has on the American society.

The director Elia Kazan, a critic of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War himself, points to produced ‘The Visitors’ to be a film that represents the tragedy of war. Therefore, Kazan points to psychological struggle and behavioral change of demonizing the enemy. Kazan turned around the notion of demonization by portraying the American soldier characters as ordinary, typical young American people.²⁴ Therefore, in ‘The Visitors’, “demons” are ordinary Americans. This way of inserting demonization in anti-war film is based on real events during the end of Johnson’s presidency and the start of Nixon’s role in taking over American involvement. The real event in Vietnam that represent the brutality by the American soldiers are Incident on Hill 192, My Lai Massacre and the clash between American soldiers and Viet Cong guerrillas.²⁵

‘The Visitors’ also suggests that the “demons” among ordinary Americans should be the responsibility of the American people to deal with. The film shows emphatic feelings for the American veterans and civilians by portraying them as victims of government policies. It takes the audience back to the root causes of traumatic events

²⁴ Ron Briley, *The Ambivalent Legacy of Elia Kazan: The Politics of the Post-HUAC Films* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

²⁵ Ibid.

that changed war veteran characters into violent people. The veterans that bring violence back to the U.S. did not have a choice in the war because they had to follow orders and were confronted with brutality daily. American civilians also have to cope with the veterans coming back and understand the war trauma they suffer. Based on film narrative and characters' dialogue, 'The Visitors' further points out how war was not the only factor that shapes the violent characteristic of American society. The old veterans that embraced the victory of World War II, the violence in American football, and hunting with guns. These narratives display other factors, including: personal experiences, media, and the activities that promote more violence in America.

'The Visitors' presents anti-war images that criticize the war policies of President Nixon. In 1968 Nixon's presidential campaign introduced Vietnamization. The policy would end the war with peace. However, the war still went on for five years. Nixon still used similar policies to Johnson and remained involved in the Vietnam War. The film, therefore, reflects how the U.S. war policies implanted violence, and created a demonic mindset inside the American people who were deployed to Vietnam. In 1971-1972, President Nixon launched a U.S. soldier withdrawal policy and replaced them with local South Vietnamese personnel. This stopped further American casualties but did not prevent the surviving soldiers from suffering from war trauma or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). 'The Visitors' reveals that the war trauma still goes on in America because the withdrawal policy came too late.

'The Visitors' suggests a truth about how the Vietnam War impacted the United States. The demonization discourse provides an understanding of how American people can be as evil as the enemy and the U.S. government persuaded their own soldiers to kill. The realistic depictions in 'The Visitors' provided a strong anti-war message that could touch the audience. It was produced after the withdrawal policy started. The filmmaker, Kazan, already experienced how Vietnam War veterans were after they came back from the foreign land.

4.3.3 Civilizational Superiority in Anti-War Film

'The Visitors' sheds a critical light on the notion of civilizational superiority compared to the earlier pro-war films, which merely promoted democracy, peace and prosperity. The film does not follow exactly the idea of Orientalism, or the

White Man's burden. 'The Visitors' depicts the civilizational superiority discourse as a goal that the U.S. government set but did not reach its expectation. Moreover, the war has transformed the United States to be more violent, not much different from the Viet Cong opponent.

Another reason that the civilizational superiority discourse is missing from 'The Visitors' is that the film only shows the American veterans and the ordinary citizens have turned into "demons" because the violence they commit and experience in the war. The "demon" transformation challenges the civilized American Society that they do not have superior regime or the enemy that they faced at the war. The film does not depict how American Society has a moral high ground and how they try shape Vietnam in the same direction. The film instead shows the self-understanding of how the Americans viewed themselves as a more civilized people to the group that contain violent mindset as to the Viet Cong. Therefore, 'The Visitors' used civilizational superiority discourse to remind the audience that the U.S. does not have superior regime than other countries. The American civilized society cannot be used to shape the "demons" within their own citizens, thus the war still encourage the Americans to conduct demonic violence.

'The Visitors' challenges the U.S. government trapped in colonial practices and using democratic regime discourse as excuses for their Vietnam War involvement. The film criticizes that nationalism and civilizational superiority concepts promoted by the U.S. government in pro-war films come from political propaganda. The concepts in pro-war films are based on fictional images supported by the U.S. government. 'The Visitors' depicts a closer realistic image of the soldiers' lives after returning from war than the images represented in the earlier pro-war films. The film also criticizes the democratic regime, the U.S. government, and the military continuing to take control of the country. Public decisions in the film were manipulated by the media under the government's control. As a result, the U.S. government still led them to a war that could not be won and U.S. soldiers lost their lives continuously in the battlefield. This reveals similarities between democracy and communism, i.e., the authority has control over their own civilians. It is the anti-war message that shows another aspect of viewing democracy and reconsiders defining peace and prosperity, instead of promoting one regime over another.

In conclusion, textual analysis help us decipher the messages that filmmakers provide and how some of them are influenced by the U.S. government. The texts, symbols, and discourses have influential messages that support the U.S. during the Johnson Administration. The nationalism discourse provides the main purpose as to why the U.S. government decided to deploy American troops in assisting South Vietnamese people. The sign from this discourse shows a heroic patriotic purpose that helps other countries being overran by opponents. Another discourse is demonization of the enemies which emphasizes how evil the opponents are, and how heroic U.S. soldiers had the capabilities to contain those opponents from occupying the whole of Vietnam. The last discourse suggests that how democracy is morally superior to communism and that it will lead to peace. Civilizational superiority then depicts Vietnam negatively under communism. The U.S. government had the power to turn Vietnam around by winning the war and replacing the regime with democracy.

The textual analysis also reveals that anti-war messages condemned the U.S. government for using war policies which led the American people to the Vietnam War. The anti-war analysis illustrates that the tragic truth about Vietnam War. The film contests every discourse that the pro-war films present. It points out that pro-war films only justify the U.S. government's decision to involve with Vietnam War which result in United States' benefits. The pro-war films only focus on promoting democracy over communism and show the role of U.S. as a world leader. The U.S. government recognized that pro-war films will advocate the government's policies to the American citizens. The U.S. government, therefore, had the will to support pro-war films with budget and military assistance more than the anti-war films. Nevertheless, the anti-war films present the contrasting message from the pro-war films toward the U.S. government and their war policies. The anti-war films criticized the government by depicting the flaw of the discourses present in pro-war films. Anti-war films propose that every discourse constitutes a part of pro-war films' public persuasions for U.S. government's policies. Therefore, the U.S. government treats anti-war films differently from the pro-war films by being pungent about the anti-war films' messages and does not provide any assistance for the anti-war films.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

War films are a cultural extension of U.S. war policies in the Vietnam War for various reasons. The politics of film production and the textual analysis help us understand the relationship between war policies, film industry and political ideologies. In this chapter, I offer three aspects of the analysis of the relationship.

The first aspect regards how Vietnam War films have supported the American involvement in Vietnam War. The pro-war films were produced to depict the U.S. war in Vietnam as positive and contributive. Both Will Zen ('To the Shores of Hell') and John Wayne ('The Green Berets') portray American soldiers as heroes who rescued Vietnam from the communist infiltrators. These filmmakers shared a perspective with the U.S. government. They provided persuasive heroic images for the American audiences to consume in anticipation of garnering public support for the government's war policies. The American role as heroes who advocated democracy is part of the pro-war messages reinforcing nationalism and civilizational superiority. The two discourses shape the film depiction of the American role in two ways. First, nationalism focuses on delivering the American role as the way to define the nation. The pro-war films base their foundation on the concept of nationalism in reflecting how American people have to involve in the war because they are the only savior for the South Vietnamese people. The discourse identifies Americans as heroes who fight for their country and for other countries that follow America's lead to democracy. Second, civilizational superiority depicts the civilized Americans following democracy and assisting Vietnam, which is an uncivilized country being infiltrated by communism. The discourse paints the U.S. as being superior to Vietnam. The U.S., with its strong military power, should serve as a democratic leader against the Viet Cong communist guerrillas to create peace and prosperity. Therefore, the combination of both discourses validates a significant role Americans can play in the war by being supportive of the government's policy, which was to assist South Vietnam's fight against communism.

'The Visitors', an anti-war film during the Nixon Administration, also depicts an American role through film narratives. Elia Kazan did not receive any

assistance from the U.S. government, which allowed him to express criticism of the American role in the Vietnam War without any limits. Kazan took advantage of his limited budget by executing the American role in his own way. In 'The Visitors', the role of American government is defined as a failing attempt to pursue its policy in Vietnam. The film portrays an American veteran suffering from the war as a result of the U.S. propaganda that promised the American public of winning the war. Nationalism in 'The Visitors' was presented as a U.S. government attempt to divert the American audience from recognizing the brutality of the war. The U.S. government tried to convince the public that there were significant advantages of being American and that the soldiers should fight for their country. Therefore, 'The Visitors' brought out the negative side of using nationalist discourse in the war, which the U.S. government was unable to handle. The civilizational superiority discourse is also represented in the film, similar to nationalism. 'The Visitors' depicts how the veterans used to embrace U.S. war policies that contained the mindset that Americans were better, stronger and more civilized than the Vietnamese. But, the result of the war proved that the so-called democratic American veterans also conducted violence in the same way as the Viet Cong. The American veterans' justification of the use of violence was elaborated on in the demonization of the enemy discourse. The film turns around the demonization discourse in depicting the American veterans that had a violent mindset. The veterans suffered through the war, which caused them to bring violent personality back home. American veterans were now accustomed to committing violence against other people, which shows how war turns ordinary people into "demons". 'The Visitors', therefore, condemns the U.S. government trying to persuade the public to enlist in the war and spending more on an unwinnable war by using the American role.

Lastly, the pro-war films normalize violence, leading to public justification of the war policies. The pro-war films, 'To the Shores of Hell' and 'The Green Berets' depict 'war' as an event that caused a massive loss of life and resources, but was necessary for the creation of peace. The inevitable war in pro-war films seeks to convince the audience that 'war' is the only way to create a long-term peace because war would get rid of the invading enemy. This idea can be seen from the start in the pro-war film productions that the U.S. government and Department of Defense were

involved in. The pro-war filmmakers had discussions with U.S. government personnel concerning how they should use their films to popularize the governments' war policies to the public. The filmmakers try to produced films that promoted the necessity of war, and showed that the American military was capable of coping with the situation in Vietnam. The mutual goal of the government personnel and the filmmakers was to further promote the necessity of war by stating that the U.S. had to wage war against the Viet Cong because the South Vietnamese soldiers could not fight by themselves against the fully-armed Viet Cong supported by the leading communist countries. The pro-war films' depictions supported the war-for-peace concept. The symbols and images in the pro-war films demonstrate to the audience that war was necessary. Both pro-war films depict the brutality of the war with the purpose of showing heroic American soldiers strictly following government orders and being willing to die in action. The nationalism, demonization of enemies and civilizational superiority discourses are all used to normalize the war to convince the American general public that the U.S. government's war policies were justified. Nationalism glorifies American heroes, the demonization discourse leads to the war justification of killing the Viet Cong, and civilization superiority makes the case for saving the Vietnamese people by introducing them to democracy. These discourses combine with the earlier discussion about film productions represent the pro-war films' ability to normalize the war. Dominant groups, including the U.S. government and the Hollywood film industry are involve in producing pro-war messages for audiences. The groups use political discourses to justify the government's war policies and come up with reasons that explain why the U.S. government made the right decision to get involved in the Vietnam War.

The anti-war film seeks to de-normalize the war. 'The Visitors' views the issue of war normalization differently in both film narrative and elements. The film depicts the other side of the Vietnam War, which shows that it was unnecessary for the United States to get involved. Kazan, the director, address the necessity of war in his own perspective, similar to the sentiment for American's involvement in Vietnam War. The film shows that 'war' is not the necessary event that leads to peace. Elia Kazan understood that in order to send that message, he needs to depict how war can negatively impact the American citizens. The brutality of war only causes more

suffering and demonize the people. The film conclude that the Vietnam war does not provide any justification for U.S. war policies and also underline that the discourses introduced in pro-war films are a part of U.S. government propaganda.

The analysis of war films during 1964-1973 as a cultural resource explains the support of U.S. war policies for pro-war films, thus, provides a supporting evidence for this thesis. First, it shows that the U.S. government's war policies could influence the film contents the Hollywood produces. During the Vietnam war, some Hollywood film directors paid high attention to these policies because they served as an important tool the U.S. used to deal with domestic opinion about the Vietnam War situation. Furthermore, the Vietnam War was a platform for the U.S. Presidents and their administrations showcase their democratic power over communism during the Cold War. Therefore, Hollywood filmmakers see these policies as an opportunity to express their opinion on the U.S. war policies through films that they produce. Conversely, the U.S. government also took the Hollywood industry's interest into consideration as well as trying to regulate the film industry to produce only pro-war films that support their policies. The U.S. Vietnam War policies also leads to the second supporting evidence which is the film production relationship between the U.S. government and the Hollywood film industry. The relationship between the U.S. government personnel and the filmmakers is significant because it determines the amount of the budget and military assistances supported by American government for the anti-war and pro-war films. Filmmakers that produce pro-war films receive a full support in government assistance whereas the anti-war filmmakers do not receive any support and even screening limitation in domestic cinema. The double standard provided by the U.S. government shows how war films during the Vietnam War were used as media propaganda and how they restrain the anti-war films from showing the negative illustrations to the American people. Convincingly, these war films production shows that the U.S. government tried to convince the Hollywood film industry to produce only political messages that support U.S. war policies.

Such film production relationship with American government leads to the understanding of how political messages that were propagated by the Vietnam War films has impact on war justification. The pro-war film messages here is the indicator of how the pro-war films production received a massive amount of assistances provided

by the U.S. government. These reasons reestablish the fact of how pro-war filmmakers are able to insert the discourses that emphasize the U.S. war policies to portrayed its actions as heroic against the Viet Cong demonic exercise. The pro-war discourses backed the U.S. war policy by portraying the U.S. as a civilized democratic country who can win the war against communism and its uncivilized army.

The outcome of this thesis argues that Hollywood pro-war films provided full political support messages for the U.S. government during the war. However, the pro-war films were only produced during the Johnson Administration, which was the period of optimism concerning the outcome of the Vietnam War. The supporting messages were still normal depictions in films produced by Hollywood because they believed that it would provide the same feedback from audiences, similar to the films during World War II. The Hollywood films, however, turned out to be a medium used to criticize the U.S. government's policies and actions in Vietnam during the Nixon Administration. The film produced anti-war messages that supported the anti-war movements and protests. The anti-war depictions became more popular because during Nixon's presidency the war's outcome was already seen as a failure.

In conclusion, the thesis presented Hollywood war films that played significant roles as cultural extensions by providing both support and criticism of U.S. war policies in Vietnam. It illustrated how Hollywood films were significant for the U.S. government in terms of being a medium used to convince the American public that its Vietnam War policies were justified. Hollywood films could also criticize and provide anti-war messages to fuel the U.S. anti-war movement as well.

This thesis contributes an understanding of the relationship between U.S. war policies and the Hollywood film industry, which generated pro-war messages in some films. The thesis proposes a sub-field in international relations studies, which is a combination of textual analysis and related government policies. The thesis identifies a knowledge gap between the two sub-fields that previous studies researched separately. Therefore, this research is significant in demonstrating the film production relationship with the U.S. government that produced pro-war messages echoing U.S. war policies. The research also shows how each component of film production includes the director's ideological stance, the relationship between the two institutions and financial incentives, which are all related to the U.S. government war policies.

However, the research did not provide the answer of whether the use of Hollywood war films was able to influence the American public. There is no causal relationship of how the Hollywood films could affect the American public opinion in relation to U.S. war policies. The research only suggests that film can be a significant factor that resonates with popular belief.



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