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Character Development: to Further the Narrative

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Character Development: To Further the Narrative.

Presentation Abstract

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Screenplays on war can often become redundant. Not because they aren't good screenplays, it's simply because the focus relies too much on the brutality of war and not enough on the characters being forced to endure it. *Hamburger Hill* (1987) is not one of the run of the mill Vietnam War films that simply walk us through the killing of both sides without giving us the why. While most films can easily pull off the killing and dying, Jim Carabatsos' writing in *Hamburger Hill* is able to deliver the true "why" soldiers fight through character development. Some might say other Vietnam War screenplays such as *Apocalypse Now* (1979) or *Platoon* (1986) have given us the why through character development, but I argue that there was no character development in those screenplays. In *Apocalypse Now* we are outright told about the antagonist and why he has gone crazy and fighting his fight, thus no room for development. In *Platoon* we do see character development, but not anything that digs into why these soldiers are fighting the war, only why and how they are choosing sides in their in-fighting among their group. Jim Carabatsos' use of character development in *Hamburger Hill* allows the viewer to take a step back from the carnage of war and truly connect with the characters in the screenplay, thus furthering the narrative long after the film ends. In this presentation I will demonstrate how Carabatsos' writing enabled him to better develop characters than that of other Vietnam War screenplays.