



# Casablanca: Movies and Memory

*Marc Auge*

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## **Casablanca: Movies and Memory** Marc Auge

Marc Augé was eleven or twelve years old when he first saw *Casablanca*. Made in 1942 but not released in France until 1947, the film had a profound effect on him. Like cinephiles everywhere, Augé was instantly drawn to Rick Blaine's mysterious past, his friendship with Sam and Captain Renault, and Ilsa's stirring, seductive beauty. The film-with its recurring scenes of waiting, menace, and flight-occupies a significant place in Augé's own memory of his uprooted childhood and the wartime exploits of his family.

Marc Augé's elegant and thoughtful essay on film and the nature of both personal and collective memory contends that some of our most haunting memories are deeply embedded in the cinema. His own recollections of the hurried, often chaotic embarkations of his childhood, he writes, are become intertwined with scenes from *Casablanca* that have become bigger in his memory through repeated viewings in the movie houses of Paris's Latin Quarter.

Seamlessly weaving together film criticism and memoir, *Casablanca* moves between Augé's insights into the filmgoing experience and his reflections on his own life, the collective trauma of France's wartime history, and how such events as the fall of Paris, the exodus of refugees, and the Occupation-all depicted in the film-were lived and are remembered.

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