

Argo and casablanca – main characters comparison

[Literature](#), [Character](#)



Both Tony and Rick are faced with a dilemma throughout Argo and Casablanca, respectively. They catch themselves getting more and more involved with the escape plan, and then their emotional connection leads to altruistic actions. Both Argo and Casablanca have a scene that underscores these characters transitions. On the first movie Mendez, have a heated up conversation with his boss on the phone, while on the other movie, Blaine points a gun at an official.

Up to this part, the characters were very cold, and professional, however, after it they become attached to the people that are being saved. On one side, the scene selected in Argo focuses on: camera proximity and movement, decor and framing. On the other side, the scene selected in Casablanca focuses on: soundtrack, camera movement and positioning, and on and off screen space. The camera proximity and camera movement in Argo, emphasizes the characters reactions, by always showing the character with the strongest reaction.

It is noticeable that the camera zooms in Tony as soon as he is alone in the room, and is kept that close to him until the end; his supervisor only has one close-up shot, while the camera spins around him, it is when he is explaining the new changes in CIA's operation, and for the rest of the scene, the camera captures Jack O'Donnell through medium/close-up shots, finishing with a medium shot of him breaking a cup on his table. The camera is handheld on Mendez' shots, creating a more personal, and emotional perception of the character, while the zoom highlights his reactions and creates tension to the scene as whole.

The steady shots of Jack are calmer, and more impersonal, making him look more professional, and less emotive. The framing plays an important role on this sequence. Both Tony and Jack are placed on the right side of the screen at first, with Tony changing sides on the frame only when he states that he and his boss are responsible for the people they are trying to save. The right side of the screen is reserved for when the characters are more impersonal and professional, while the left side of the screen is used only when Tony explicitly becomes emotionally attached.

Decor and lighting differentiate the perception of each space used on the scene. In the house located in Iran, the lighting is darker because the scene is slightly underexposed, which helps create a low-key effect, while warm colors dominate the location. This assists on the creation of a more intimate environment, just like a house should be. On the other side of the world, in CIA's headquarters, O'Donnell's office receives natural lighting from its window, which illuminates a blue wall as well as a typewriter of the same color, making this space look like a professional location, analogous to a typical workplace.

In Casablanca, the camera positioning and movement play an important part too. However, the positions and movement are broader, ranging from long shots to close-ups and from static positioning to panning around the location; different angles are used as well. Long shots in addition to panning introduce the area that will be used throughout the scene, which are the Cafe's bar, and its entrance, that is seen from both the inside and outside.

Another panning, more noticeable than the others, is the one that shows Renault spying on the other characters from Rick's office; the camera pans in <https://assignbuster.com/argo-and-casablanca-main-characters-comparison/>

a diagonal fashion from the upper right, where the officer is hidden, to the lower left, the spot where the three other characters are and also the place where the rest of the sequence takes place. Racking focus is used when Major Strasser's subordinate opens his office's door; the focus quickly changes between the man and his superior. A low angle is used when the official says that Laszlo is under arrest, which aggrandizes the captain.

In this scene, mood and tension is accomplished mainly by soundtrack and sound effects instead of dialogue, in comparison to Argo's selected scene, which does exactly the opposite. At first, when Rick is talking to Ilsa, the song "As Time Goes By" plays on the background as a motif, creating intimacy between them, and as Victor joins them, the song transforms for a brief moment, suddenly disappearing when Renault, in the same shot as aforementioned in the last paragraph, surprises the Resistance hero, thus producing tension.

To increase tension even further, a sound effect is used when Rick points his gun at Louis, and his voice is heard off-screen, until the camera tilts towards his face. The soundtrack is back before long, and its purpose now is to underscore tension as Renault makes the phone call. In terms of formal elements, Casablanca's selected sequence relates more to the rest of the movie than does Argo's, because only the editing and mise-en-scene aspects are kept the same through the picture, the sound and cinematography are an exception to the rule.

Casablanca brands its mise-en-scene and cinematography with relatively spacious locations, and the camera helps to manifest it by using wide angled lens on top of long-shots. Lighting is often the standard three-point scheme, <https://assignbuster.com/argo-and-casablanca-main-characters-comparison/>

and it kept fixed on most reaction shots. Men are always formally dressed, while Ilsa changes between three different outfits and the cinematography is widely characterized by the use of straight-on angles, to maintain neutrality towards characters, with the exception of a few low shots, which raises some characters' power.

Long shots are predominant on the beginning of scenes, and medium shots, showing two or more people in a group, soon substitute it; close-ups are used mostly for reaction shots. Camera movement includes everything, but handheld and aerial shots. Wide-angle lenses are the favorite in this motion picture. The editing and sounds, follows Hollywood's standards, always consist of an establishing shot on the beginning of each new scene, introduced by a dissolve from the previous scene's last shot, and a shot/reverse shot when characters are talking.

Usually the rhythm happens on a medium speed. The diegetic sounds prevails, and are easily noticed, they include: most of the music heard on Rick's Cafe, background noises and sound effects of all sorts, and dialogues. The start of both Argo and Casablanca are almost the same, a narration in addition to various dissolves, introduces rapidly where the films will take place and also a point on history, the only difference is that Casablanca uses a globe, while Argo utilizes the sketches of the fake movie.

In Argo, only the editing and mise-en-scene relates to the chosen sequence and the rest of the movie. The main locations are six: Los Angeles, the Central Intelligence Agency's headquarters, the Iranian house, Iran's streets, the airport/airplane, and the US embassy on the opening of the movie; and each of them has its own rhythm and amounts of tension, with the ones

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located in United States having the longest takes with less direct tension and the ones in Iran's outdoors being the most tense ones and with the shortest takes.

The connection between the countries is made with the repetitive use of cross cutting on some sequences. Continuity practically does not exist on the chosen sequence, but does on the rest of the motion picture. Most of the lighting is supposed to be natural. The costumes are typical of each character's home country. The editing strongly relates to Casablanca by using Hollywood's standards, like dissolve between scenes, shot/reverse shot during conversations.

Cinematography is very different among scenes, and uses all of the possibilities. The scene selected is the only one with a handheld camera with shots focusing on only one character; the other uses for this technique always include groups of people. Aerial shots are also included throughout the movie, in contrast with Casablanca that has none. The camera is always on the eye-level of the shortest character being shown. Close-ups are equally used to show reactions and details, with more camera movement on the last.

Sound use is somewhat more complex in Argo, with many off-screen and voice over sounds, like when a conversation is held over the phone or background noises for instance. However, for all the other sections Casablanca and Argo are very similar. Tony and Rick are exclusively professional characters, both of them possess a high social position, and are financially stable, they also enjoy desired political positions among their peers, and neither display signs of emotional attachment to others, until the selected scene on each movie.

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After it, both characters start to be perceived as warmer people, who are still able to be, in their own ways, part of intimate relationships. As the pictures get closer to their ends, Mendez and Blaine are not seen exclusively as professionals anymore, but as more altruistic persons, the CIA's agent also boosts his social, and political, position by receiving an award, while the Cafe's owner earns respect from the couple and the corrupt official.

In the end, it is easily acknowledged that both movies are more similar than different, with a special call for their plot, beginning, development of main character, and major formal elements. The differences, if evaluated properly, are almost none, and are all hidden among small details. Coincidentally or not, Michael Curtiz has a quote that applies appropriately to both Tony and Rick when they become emotionally attached to the hostages and the couple, respectively; the quote is " The only things you regret are the things you don't do. "