*Citizen Kane* (1941)

*Citizen Kane* is acclaimed by many as the greatest movie in the history of cinema. It was Orson Welles’s first film, which he directed, produced, co-wrote, and also starred as the lead role. The narrative revolves around the rise and fall of the main Charles Foster Kane, who was apparently based on the newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst.

*Citizen Kane* is celebrated for its innovative narrative techniques and cinematography that combines elements of German expressionism, Surrealism, deep-focus filming that challenge the boundaries between fantasy and realism. There are paradoxical ways of reading the film. According to Andre Bazin, the extended use of deep focus portrays the realistic world of the film. On the other hand, the heightened expressionism, the play of shadow and light, use of dissolves and montage to undermine the linear progression of the narrative generates a world of ambiguity and obscurity. Gregg Toland, the cinematographer, played a highly influential in creating the innovative visuals of the film.

A series of flashbacks conveyed by multiple narrators to describe the character of Kane turns the structure of the film into a jigsaw puzzle to be put together by the viewer. The multiple and contrary personalities of Kane that emerge form the flashbacks turn him into a hero of epic proportions. The paradoxical character of Kane reflects diverse social and political issues: the clash between capitalism and communism, the questioning of American nationalism, the role of patriarchy, the theme of social alienation etc.

**References and further reading**:

Bazin, André. (1978), *Orson Welles: A Critical View*

Carringer, Robert. (1985), *The Making of Citizen Kane*

# Naremore, James, ed. (2004). *Orson Welles's Citizen Kane: A Casebook*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**Paratextual**

*Warner Bros.*

*Citizen Kane- Images, DVD, Gallery, (DVD) - http://www2.warnerbros.com/citizenkane****/***

Wellesnet: The Orson Welles Web Resource **-** [**http://www.wellesnet.com/?cat=21**](http://www.wellesnet.com/?cat=21)

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