**Citizen Kane**

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# Citizen Kane

Orson Welles 1941 film tells the story of a man who had everything, then lost it all during his quest to be loved by everyone. It recounts the life of Charles Foster Kane who became the future heir to the 6th largest private fortune in America. His mother sent him to be raised under the care of bank, until his 25th birthday. Once reaching 25 he did not want to manage his fortune and only wanted to control a small newspaper, assuming *it might be fun*.

As the papers publisher he wastes no time calling to light scandals and his Declaration of Principles. He buys competitors and within 6 years’ time runs the largest media outline in the country. Despite the admiration of the people and his 450 member staff, they are all faceless voids in the background.

He decides that going into politics would be good way to interact with the people and gain their love. However just as quickly as he enters politics so must he exit, due to his own scandal involving “The Singer.” Kane is divorced and two weeks later remarried, to Susan.

Kane is quoted as viewing Susan as *the great American public cross section*. Making her a successful singer that is under his control becomes an obsession for him. He menacing dictates what she will do until an attempted suicide frees her from the bonds of work.

After Susan quits her singing career, Kane has nothing left and retreats to his palace called Xanadu. The enormous palace is more of a tomb than a home; with deep residing echoes, enormous fire paces full of bleakness.

Around the age of 70 Susan finally divorces him, resulting in a spat of rage that demolishes her room. Kane is now completely isolated and alone without a friend or associate in the world. He retires to his bed reminiscing of the last time he was happen, back in Colorado playing with his sled in the snow.

# Elements of the Film

## Film Genre

The film would most be classified as a drama, though it barrows elements from other genres. For example Mr. Thompson’s character runs around interviewing everyone similar to a mystery movie. There are also strong biographical components as the film barrows from the life of W.R. Hearst.

As a drama it follows many of the common characteristics such as: the rise and fall of the protagonist, designed to be particularly funny, and overall a realistic fiction story.

## Editing

There were some bold choices made about the editing that paid off well for the story telling. For example the story was not told in chronological order starting from boyhood to death as an old man. Instead the film was presented as an onion with each retelling giving more of the full picture.

Specifically we start with knowing only that this presumably wealthy man has died. Then we are shown a synopsis of his life from the perception of the public. They recount the high level points but not as much into why these things occurred. During the third layer we see a collection of antidotes that attempt to explain Kane.

## Sound

The sound effects used throughout the film greatly enhanced the experience. For example during the later scenes in Xanadu the use of echoes as they spoke. This provided a sense that they were alone in a deserted world devoid of other life. Having dialog to provide the same emotion would have been tedious or felt forced.

Another example was during the fight scene in the tent. After Kane slaps Susan there are light tracks of a woman screaming, played in external to the action. This enabled the director-producer to express the violent component of Kane’s control without making the movie overly dark.

## Sound Track

The sound track was carefully selected to add a subtle component to the exposed scenes. Upon their arrival at the tent, we are welcomed with a song that true love does not exist.

Another example could be seen with the upbeat music played as the prostitutes danced away in celebration. The liveliness made the audience feel as though they were part of the action.

## Cinematography

Every shot is well thought out and every element is intentional. For example there is frequently shots that make elements larger and smaller. This gives effects such as Susan is tiny, weak, and only a speck compared to the ego that is Kane.

There is exceptional use of light to: produce foreshadowing, highlight good and evil, convey loneliness among the crowds of people, and create mystery around main characters.

## Social Context

Of the many social context, the notion of a lonely man barren of love is the most prominent. This concept spans all classes of people, both poor and wealthy.

## Meaning of the Movie

The movie is about isolation and how no amount of stuff can ever fill the emptiness of loneliness. He could have accepted some love, but wanted all of it and all on his terms.

## Personal Bias

I went into the film with no preconceived ideas other than it was supposed to be good. Both the text book and the facilitator made multiple references to the production. Upon watching it I could relate to the premise and equally wanting the world to love and respect me.

# Review Conclusions

Citizen Kane was a great movie that was enjoyable to watch. This came not only from the plot, but experimental technics with camera and lighting effects. There is also many hidden gems that will not be seen until the viewer spends the time to carefully inspect each scene. To properly do this requires more than one viewing.

After viewing it a second or third time, elements such as Mr. Bernstien always being small and visually insignificant are noticed. He retires into a desk that is too big behind a chair that is too large for him to hide behind. Or as they send a way Charles right at eye level is a dinner bell, an instrument for calling family back home.

This is the sort of movie that everyone should own in their DVD collection and is worthy of at least a 4.5 star rating.