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### The Purpose of Ringo Kid and Charles Kane

What is our purpose in this life? Why do we exist? Is it to gain wealth and amaze a fortune? Is it to live fast and die young, burning bright with passion and fire then die out like a candle in winter? Or is it something more? Could this life be more than just selfishness and greed, perhaps life is more about goodness and purity of self? If one were to watch “Citizen Kane”, and attempt to mirror their life after the main character, Kane, they may believe life is about gaining wealth, that is if they only peeked surface deep into the film. However, we know from further analysis that the true moral story of our main character is something deeper, something more about a warning of what happens when we pursue greed and wealth. Compare Kane to another character “Ringo” from Stage Coach whose motives and morals are a bit more “pure”.

The main character of “Citizen Kane” is modeled after a man who lived in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This man’s name was William Randolph Hearst, and the main character of “Citizen Kane”, Charles Foster Kane, is meant to portray Hearst. William Hearst was a very wealthy man, a man who acquired his wealth through “Yellow Journalism”, which is journalism based on sensationalism and crude exaggeration. He was a newspaper magnet, and at one point, one of the wealthiest men in America. It is this parallelizing of an actual person to the movie character that brings realism to the movie and to the main character.

The movie portrays the main character as young boy who leaves his family at an early age with a massive fortune. It's not long before he attempts to run a paper, and not long after that does he begin to amass a great fortune from his new business. Kane becomes so rich that he ends up buying a castle. The movie continues on with him creating such immense wealth that he doesn't know what to do with it, and in the end, all he has is his house. He drives away all the people who love him and care about. He gets divorced from his first wife because he fell in love with another woman and had an affair with this new woman. After some time of him being with his new wife she leaves him, for a multitude of reasons, the core reason being Kane's lack of an ability to love anyone. By the end of the film it becomes apparent that Kane is miserable and can't love anyone but his constantly tormented by his desire for others to love him. He becomes obsessed with his outer image, constantly wanting it to be perfect. There is a time when he even tries to run for a government office position but loses because of his affair. If I were asked to describe this movie, I would say it's a sad selfish lonely man, who was constantly chasing after love from others but never being satisfied and eventually, dying alone in a room all by himself.

What is the purpose of life? According to Charles Foster Kane the purpose would be to gain love from others yet horde the things that would benefit the rest of the world. His greedy desires and wants for more power and wealth are a corruption of the soul to an astronomical level that leaves him blank and empty. His purpose in life, as it appears, was to either have no purpose and follow whatever path your heart desires, or it was to gain wealth and privilege and horde it for himself. If this is the goal or purpose of life to Mr. Kane, then to deduce whether or not it would be rewarding we look to how his life ended, what was the sum total of all his lifes work. In the end, he died alone with no one there to see him go, and no one there to comfort him.

Kane's wants and needs that drove his motto in life, his purpose would seem to be counterproductive to a happy, fulfilling life as tradition would put it. Maybe that is part of the point of the movie, to illustrate the miserable life of those who chase fleeting materialism instead of filling their life with meaning and a greater purpose than selfishness. For all of the things he's had he was the saddest and most lonely of them all.

Compare our friend Kane to the protagonist Ringo from the movie "Stagecoach". When we first see Ringo Kid, we are led to believe that he is a bad guy as he broke out of jail, or that he has done something wrong worthy of meriting jail time. As the story unfolds we learn that he is kind to our character Dallas, who is a harlot, and a woman that was shunned by others around them. When the movie ends, we've discovered that Ringo broke out of jail to avenge the death of his father and brother who were murdered by Luke Plummer; then closes out the movie with Ringo and Dallas riding off to his estate to live happily ever after.

Ringo's motives were more based on justice than anything else. At a time when you could take the law into your own hands, Ringo does so by avenging his family. This is the moment in his life where he needs justice for his family, it is that need that drives his purpose. Purpose to Ringo means defending those who may not be able to defend themselves, being kind to those who perhaps need an extra dose of kindness, and righting the wrongs and injustices of the world he lives in. It is this purpose that draws more people to like the main character Ringo and a reason why he has become an arch type for a typical Hollywood protagonist / hero.

Let's not stop at Hollywood or the screen, but instead take these philosophies, ideas or ways of life and apply them to everything. Kane, like we've seen is a sad selfish lonely man who does not have a happy satisfying ending. Ringo, on the other hand does get this happy ending. Ringo rides off into the sunset with the person he's in love with, but only after he gets the

satisfaction of avenging his family. Ringo gets all the things he actually wants, whereas Kane does not. Kane's desire to be loved never gets satisfied as people end up hating him and everything he stands for. We see this same result happening all around us, from business men who are huge that people end up disliking to politicians that lose the public's trust, love, and respect. Kane loses all that he's acquired and all the people who've loved him. His story is not a happy one, where he rides off into the sunset to live happily ever after.

There are philosophical lessons to take away from these two different examples. Our actions determine the results we get out of life, this is the first. Kane chose selfishness and greed and ended up being by himself. Ringo desired selflessness, then acted upon that desire and as a result he ended up with his love. Ringo lived a happy life and because of that his life was happy. Kane lived a hollow life and as a result was himself hollow. What we surround ourselves with, what we choose to allow into our lives has a direct effect on the outcome of our life and the purpose of our life. These choices mold us and shape us into living our purpose, and it's different for every person. Ringo's purpose was defending the wrongs done to others. Kane's purpose was defending his own selfish desires.

Philosophy and purpose go hand in hand. Philosophy is a way of understanding ideas and thinking in new ways. Purpose is the underlying believe that drives our actions. If we are to understand the purpose, we need to understand the idea behind the purpose which is philosophy, and making well stated arguments for the understanding of those ideas. Since what we want influences our believes which drives our purpose, it is equally important to understand those believes and ideals. Our purpose can only be taken from wants and needs. To get more personal and relate this to my life, I've seen from the people around me that an excessive amount of money doesn't lead to happiness, nor does vengeance lead to happiness. Happiness or joy is a

product of itself. Once we realize that the things we want in life we can get, we will then act accordingly and that action will bring those results into our life.

Who would you rather be? Someone who is wealthy beyond measure, has all the objects they could ever want, but slowly loses everything, or someone who doesn't have a lot of material possessions but instead has personal human connection and a grander purpose? There is no right or wrong to a purpose only an emotional result from acting on that purpose. Whether that be sadness, happiness, or just melancholy; actions that stem from our purpose, will almost surely result in an emotional ending. What do we want out of life? What do we need out of life? Whatever the answer to those questions, we know that they will have some impact on our purpose and basic philosophical beliefs as did those of our main characters Ringo Kid, and Charles Kane.