

# Humanities critique of citizen kane



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Citizen Kane CritiqueDescriptionThe character, Charles Foster Kane, was born into a humble and slightly deprived family. A mine that was given to his parents happens to be very rich in gold and the family suddenly becomes wealthy. Kane's mother soon puts him into the hands of a New York banker by the name of Walter Thatcher in order to give him a life more in his favor. Kane was raised in an extravagant manner but was still not fond of Mr. Thatcher. When Kane is an adult he then takes control of the The Inquirer and thought that it would only be fun to run a newspaper. He writes his Declaration of Principles stating that he will deliver the truth to his readers and to defend the people of the underclass.

However, Kane almost instantly gets caught up in being the most-read paper and publishes yellow journalism, going against his word. He marries the President's niece, Emily Norton, and aspires to become a politician himself until his affair with a young singer, Susan Alexander, ruins his marriage and his chances for Governor of New York. Kane forces this new woman to perform opera against her liking and loses her partly because of this reason. After Susan tries to commit suicide he relinquishes her from the performing duties and they retire to his mansion, Xanadu, in Florida. Kane could not control his selfishness and ultimately dies in his mansion with meaningless possessions that were meant to make him feel accomplished. Jedidiah Leland was a close friend of Kane's and was the reporter for the The Inquirer.

Leland came from a family who had lost their money. He met Kane in one of the colleges that the selfish millionaire was expelled from. When Kane writes the Declaration of Principles, Leland wishes to keep the document out of

admiration and the thought that someday that original paper would be worth something. He maintained the ideals and morality that Kane himself loses over time. He and Kane disagreed on the stories that were being published. He left his friend's paper when he realized that he really wanted to abandon the yellow journalism and publish true stories and wrote a negative, but honest, article about Susan Alexander's latest performance. He also sends a \$25, 000 check back to Kane along with the original Declaration of Principles since to him both have lost their worth. The last we know of Jedidiah Leland is that he is in a nursing home with nurses who he tricks to believe that he has stopped smoking.

Susan Alexander is the second wife to Charles Foster Kane. Kane knows that her mother's dream was for her to become a singer. Kane uses his power and wealth to push her to become a subpar opera singer. Although Susan continuously complains about being a singer against her will, coldness, and lack of attention from her husband, Kane still pushes the singing and even tries to persuade others into liking his wife. The pressure and humiliation promotes Susan to attempt suicide. After the singing had halted, she stayed with Kane in Xanadu surrounded by insignificant statues and solving jigsaw puzzles by the fire. She left Kane only when she could take it no more.

Emily Norton is Charles Foster Kane's first wife. He marries Norton, the President's niece, a time after taking over the newspaper and loves her happily. The couple begins their relationship as most other newlyweds, joyous and loving. The couple is seen passing adoring comments and attentively tending to one another. As Kane becomes more enveloped by the

his newspaper the couple spends less meaningful time together. Kane is always talking about the paper or at the office and Emily gets fed up.

She spites her husband by reading a newspaper other than his and eventually stops talk to him in the time that they do have together. The relationship ends when the love-nest of Kane and Susan is exposed.

Analysis There are actually a few reasons why Orson Welles chose to produce his debut movie in black and white. The black and white could make a statement that the story is not clear. The story could not be clear for multiple reasons. First, the whole movie is trying to solve the strange mystery of ??? rosebud,??? and the black and white emphasizes the fact that nobody finds what Kane??™s last words meant.

The black and white also stress the flashbacks of the story. Often memories are clouded and aren??™t perfectly remembered and would accent the secrecy of the life of Kane especially since it is also sometimes thought that the whole movie could be a flashback of Kane??™s recollection right before his death. The lack of coloring even sets off the gloomy and miserable plot. It provides a fatal and domineering feel to everything around Kane and other characters. Welles also worked a lot with the lighting. He used high-contrast lighting to create depth and shadows.

With the high contrast lighting he can put his characters in bright light or hide them in the dark like he commonly does with Jerry Thompson and the people being interviewed are being shown brightly. The lighting that Kane uses taken from theatre techniques also acts as a spotlight. By using the high-contrast lighting, Welles can direct the viewers eyes to a specific place

on the screen or a certain person. Camera angles in Citizen Kane are unique and change the characters. The camera varies from low-angle shots to straight shot to over-head shots. The varieties of camera angles were important to Welles because he even had holes put into the set floors.

The straight shots are added to show that characters are equal to one another, on the same playing field. The shots shot from a low point looking up to a person gives that person power, as if someone lesser than they are looking up to them. This is often exhibited with shots of Kane. The over-bearing shots are shot to look down on a person.

In shots with Susan and Kane, we frequently see Susan looking up to Kane, or Kane looking down upon Susan, as he towers and powers over her. All the control is given to Kane through camera angles. The deep-focus lens also cast a new look over the shot. The lens made it so that objects in the foreground and background are completely in focus.

Deep focus was particularly effective in scenes that depict Kanes loss of control and personal isolation. The space between the foreground and the background are symbolic of the space he commands, and the space in which he has no power.