

Citizen kane

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



Citizen Kane ranks to this day as a classic masterpiece of cinematic form, with its many remarkable scenes and performances; it's cinematic and narrative techniques and in it's experimental use in photography, editing, and sound. It has been regarded as a milestone in the development of cinematic technique.

It uses film as an art form to communicate and display a non-static view of life with techniques that include the use of a subjective camera, unconventional lighting effects, an inventive use of shadows, deep-focus shots from extreme foreground to extreme background, low-angled shots revealing ceilings (which did prove big problems for Orson Welles as up until this time, the sets they were using didn't have ceilings fitted so they had to build them), hardly any use of facial close-ups, over-lapping dialogue, a cast of characters that ages throughout the film, flashbacks and the frequent use of transitional dissolves and long, uninterrupted sequence shots.

To demonstrate some of these points I have chosen two detailed scenes from the movie. The first scene is the movie's opening scene, which throws the audience into somewhere, some place they have never seen or been before. The second scene that I have chosen is of the departure of Kane's wife, Susan and the ensuing rage of Kane as he breaks up her bedroom while his dedicated staff looks on at this once powerful man reduced in strength to a schoolboy throwing a tantrum. The title screen of the movie is in bold white letters announcing the film, Citizen Kane they fill the screen over a black background, silently.

The opening scene is filled with dissolves from one sinister, mysterious image to the next, moving forward closer and closer to an unknown location. The film's first sight is a " No Trespassing" sign hanging on a giant gate in the night's foggy mist; the sign is lit up by the moonlight, the distance is still a blur. But we as the camera ignore this sign totally; we feel that we are in place that we don't belong, a place that's 'off limits' and the music is also telling us that we shouldn't be here, eerie and haunting it captures the stillness of this land, but still we drift off into the night. The camera pans up the gate that dissolves and changes into images of great iron flowers and leaves on the cast iron gate. Also on the gate is a single " K" initial for Kane.

Beyond the gate in the distance ahead of us we see a giant castle in a fairy-tale like quality. We begin to assume that who ever lives here is an extremely wealthy individual. In a series of different views the camera, slowly and quietly moves closer and closer to the castle. In the private world of the castle grounds, there are cages that contain zoo animals. We see what appear to be monkeys as they sit above a sign on one of the cages marked with a plaque that reads 'Bengal Tiger. ' Two empty boats are tied to a wooden pontoon on a mist-covered lake, and the castle is reflected in the water around them. A statue of what appears to be a cat stands before a bridge with a raised drawbridge over a stream.

A deserted golf course is marked with a sign-needing repair that reads No. 16, 365 yards, Par 4. In the distance, a single small window of the castle is lit, which as the camera moves forward frame after frame we see the window on the same part of the screen. Palm trees surround a crumbling gate on the

abandoned grounds. The castle appears in a closer, medium shot. During an even closer shot of the window, the light within the window suddenly goes out, the music comes to an eerie halt. From an angle inside the room facing out of the enormous window, a shadowy figure can be seen lying on a bed. The scene shifts to swirling snowflakes that fill the entire screen.

They are falling onto a house that has several snowmen surrounding it, and in a quick pullback, we realize it is actually a scene inside a snow shaker paperweight and its being held in the grasping hand of the old man. The first words are spoken as we hear the man utter " Rosebud"! The man drops the snowstorm and it rolls from his hand, bounces down two steps and shatters into tiny pieces on the marble floor. A door opens and a white-uniformed nurse appears on screen, reflected and distorted through the broken and shattered glass fragments from the snow shaker. In a dark, shadowy silhouette, she folds his arms over his chest, and then covers him with a sheet. The next view is again the lit window viewed from inside. A slow dissolve fades to darkness. This next scene derives from an interview with Kane's butler Raymond at Xanadu.

His memory of Susan's departure starts with a jolting cut to a screeching white cockatoo flapping off the balcony at Xanadu. We see Raymond the butler standing by the open doors looking down the long corridor with the figure of Kane standing at the other end (still in Susan's room). The light from her bedroom stretches Kane's shadow along the marble floor almost to a point of reaching Raymond at the other end of the hallway. There is a cut to Kane as he stands in the doorway of the bedroom, his face is of shock and

disbelieve by the exit of Susan. He turns and walks over to Susan's case in a low camera angle shot we see this figure of a huge man, mentally weak and looking like a giant in a bedroom of a dolls house he fumbles with the locks on the case.

He picks up the case and throws it against the wall regressing into a childlike tantrum, Kane's actions seem to take the form of a robot like posture and violently smashes up her room in a rage, smashing her lamp, table, ripping down her curtains, chest of drawers, chairs, bedside stand, her mirrored dresser and as he tears apart a bookshelf he hesitates for one second on finding a hidden bottle of alcohol before throwing it against the wall. All the while the camera is following this man as he stumbles from one side of the room to the next. Suddenly a stop, a pause in his actions as we see Kane walk up to the camera, in an extreme close up we just see his leg and at the bottom right hand side of the screen we see the snow shaker. His hand reaches down into the frame and picks up this treasured item that Susan has left behind.

He walks over to the other side of the room, over the broken glass and views the self-enclosed peaceful world in silence; he murmurs the word " Rosebud. " The camera pans up and we see tears in his eyes; he walks stiffly out of her room straight past the guests and servants who are starring in at him, not looking at any of them the camera moves back. He turns and walks out of the frame, only to be reflected in a giant hallway mirror. We see his endless reflections through a full-size mirrored corridor that depict the different angles from which observers have observed him throughout the film. After

he has exited the frame, the camera moves forward into the darkness and emptiness of the mirror and the image fades out.

Peter Woolen wrote from the 'Introduction to Citizen Kane' that " Citizen Kane had an enormous impact largely because of its virtuosity; it's variety of formal devices and technical innovations and inventions". He goes onto to say about Welles, " His interest in formal devices and technical ingenuity puts him closer to mannerism, to a conscious appreciation of virtuosity and the desire to astonish". Another film critic, James Berardinelli says, " the movie is a visual masterpiece, a kaleidoscope of daring angles and breathtaking images that had never been attempted before, and has never been equaled since. The attention to detail such as the ceilinged sets, the meticulous creation of Xanadu and technical brilliance of deep focus photography and the experimental use of uncharted camera angles combined to influence the future of cinema. Citizen Kane" is the margin by which all of Welles' later efforts came to be judged and also, in many ways the benchmark of film production".

Its outstanding technical accomplishments and historical importance may not be so obvious to some audiences now, only because Welles ideas and techniques have influenced so many other filmmakers in one respect or another, making much that was imaginative, inventive and elaborate in cinema form then seem commonplace now. Citizen Kane can be viewed on many different levels, as an art film, as a template for filmmakers, as entertainment etc. But with each viewing we as the audience are presented

with something new on every repeat viewing and that is what makes Citizen Kane the great film it is today.