

Free online course: film critique sheet #1 movie review example

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



Genre: Drama

Director: Orson Welles

Stars: Orson Welles, Joseph Cotten

Objective Analysis: (give a few examples and provide text to support your examples)

1. Visual component (such as the art direction, camera angles and movement, cinematography, lighting, visual style, etc.):

Excellent use of Expressionist cinematography (canted angles), chiaroscuro lighting (stark contrast between black and white), low angles frequently used to make Kane seem larger than life, etc. Incredible use of deep focus, such as in the shot where Kane's mother signs him away from his impoverished childhood (Kane in the background, same shot as adults in the foreground).

2. Editing component (like the pacing, rhythm, transitions, etc.):

Enormous variety of pace, with slower scenes mixed up with fast montages. Many uses of slow fades to lend a dreamlike quality to the transition of scenes, such as with the initial approach to Kane's home on the night of his death.

3. Audio component (like the soundtrack, ambient sound, dialogue, etc.):

Use of deep focused sound to make characters in background sound further away from the camera than those in the foreground (e. g. the scene in Colorado, where we hear a train in the distance). Dialogue frequently overlaps, so that the characters seem more realistic and naturalistic when they are arguing or planning.

4. Narrative component (such as the plot, characters, acting, setting, pace, symbolism, etc.):

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The narrative structure of beginning with Kane's death establishes him as a mystery that the film itself then attempts to solve. The characters of Kane and Susan are incredibly compelling, the film taking them through the story of the dissolution of a marriage.

Subjective analysis: (this is for you to state your point of view)

1. Discuss your favorite visual component or scene and WHY?

I love the opening scene in Colorado when Kane is a child, and that aforementioned deep focus shot where three different planes of depth are given their own story. Seeing the innocent boy Kane, playing while unawares of the fight over his childhood that is taking place by the parents in the foreground is a great thematic button to the movie.

2. Discuss your favorite sound component or line of dialogue and WHY?

My favorite is the initial cry of "Rosebud" as Kane dies in the beginning. This is because of the mysterious ambience that has been set up around it, and the evocative line reading by Welles that lends intrigue to the film's central mystery.

3. Discuss your shortcoming of the film and WHY ?

If I could pick one shortcoming of Citizen Kane, it would be that it is not easily digestible, but this is a minor complaint. The movie is almost ruined by its reputation as the greatest film ever made, as it sets expectations so high that any deviation can really ruin a film experience.

Online Course: Film Critique Sheet #2

Genre: Documentary

Director: Michael Wadleigh

Stars: N/A

Objective Analysis: (give examples and provide text that supports these examples)

1. What visual components (contributions) do you feel this genre has added to the world of art, if any? What was new visually about this genre?

The way the documentary captured live musical performance in a very innovative way, involving the crowd just as much as the live energy of the musicians. The use of split screen during these concert sections is also unique, as was the cinema verite approach to handheld camera.

2. What is the social/political context of this genre? What events or societal trends brought this genre into existence?

This genre in particular came about as a direct result of the counterculture, particularly in the case of Woodstock. Wanting to capture the immediacy of the free love movement and the rock scene, the filmmakers also captured the kind of fly-on-the-wall intimacy that Vietnam War footage was also bringing to the public.

3. What are the significant audio elements of this genre, if any (such as the soundtrack, ambient sound, dialogue, etc.)?

The soundtrack has to be the most intriguing aspect of Woodstock, as much of the film focuses on the live musical performances of many influential acts in the 60s and 70s, such as Santana and Jimi Hendrix. To that end, the actual tracks being played in an improvisational, live style is the chief appeal of the

documentary.

4. What are the significant narrative components (story telling, plot, characters, acting, setting, pace, symbolism) to this genre if any?

As a documentary, it does not focus overmuch on a narrative, rather trying to capture the moments surrounding Woodstock as an event. The little moments of bystanders and attendees just sharing their lives for a day make the exercise worth it.

Subjective analysis: (this is for you to give your point of view)

1. Discuss your favorite visual component or scene and WHY?

My favorite component is the split-screen segments, as they lend an unusual element to the way the concerts are filmed and force you to focus your attention on multiple places. It impressed upon me the need to capture this moment in time from as many angles as possible.

2. Discuss your favorite sound component or line of dialogue and WHY?

One of my favorite lines of dialogue comes from when one of the musicians is talking about the freeway being backed up and completely closed because of the popularity of the concert, and giddily asking, "Is that far out?" I loved it because it captured both how big this event was and how, even for the musicians, this was an incredible moment for them and for culture.

3. Discuss your shortcoming of the film and WHY ?

I would say that, overall, the film itself is too long - at nearly three hours, the concert itself becomes a bit repetitive, and enough time has passed that the social ramifications of the concert are its main draw. While the concert itself is also incredible, after a while it all becomes a bit samey with little variation.

4. How did this documentary expand your knowledge of this genre in particular and the world of film in general (give examples and why)?

Woodstock was still very influential to my appreciation for documentaries - I am used to talking-head docs that talk about an event long after it has occurred, but this doc is mostly footage that was taken during the event itself. I gained an appreciation for the ability of docs to capture the moment in a very intriguing way.