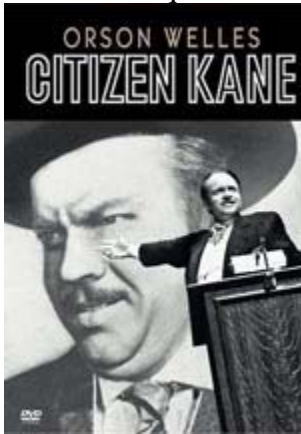


Film Techniques – Citizen Kane (1941)



Film scholars and historians view *Citizen Kane* as Welles' attempt to create a new style of filmmaking by studying various forms of movie making, and combining them all into one. The most innovative technical aspect of *Citizen Kane* is the extended use of deep focus.^[44] In nearly every scene in the film, the foreground, background and everything in between are all in sharp focus.

More importantly, the innovative, bold film is an acknowledged milestone in the development of cinematic technique, although it 'shared' some of its techniques from Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940) and other earlier films. It uses film as an art form to energetically communicate and display a non-static view of life. Its components brought together the following aspects:

- use of a subjective camera
- unconventional lighting, including chiaroscuro, backlighting and high-contrast lighting, prefiguring the darkness and low-key lighting of future *film noirs*
- inventive use of shadows and strange camera angles, following in the tradition of German Expressionists
- deep-focus shots with incredible depth-of field and focus from extreme foreground to extreme background (also found in Toland's earlier work in *Dead End* (1937), John Ford's *The Long Voyage Home* (1940), and Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940)) that emphasize mise-en-scene; also in-camera matte shots
- low-angled shots revealing ceilings in sets (a technique possibly borrowed from John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939) which Welles screened numerous times)
- sparse use of revealing facial close-ups
- elaborate camera movements
- over-lapping, talk-over dialogue (exhibited earlier in Howard Hawks' *His Girl Friday* (1940)) and layered sound
- the sound technique termed "lightning-mix" in which a complex montage sequence is linked by related sounds
- a cast of characters that ages throughout the film
- flashbacks, flashforwards and non-linear story-telling (used in earlier films, including another rags-to-riches tale starring Spencer Tracy titled *The Power and the Glory* (1933) with a screenplay by Preston Sturges, and RKO's *A Man to Remember* (1938) from director Garson Kanin and screenwriter Dalton Trumbo)
- the frequent use of transitional dissolves or curtain wipes, as in the scene in which the camera ascended in the opera house into the rafters to show the workmen's disapproval of Mrs. Kane's operatic performance; also the famous 'breakfast' montage scene illustrating the disintegration of Kane's marriage in a brief time
- long, uninterrupted shots or lengthy takes of sequences

