



Citizen Kane (BFI Film Classics)

By L. Mulvey

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Citizen Kane's reputation as one of the greatest films of all time is matched only by the accumulation of critical commentary that surrounds it. What more can there be to say about a masterpiece so universally acknowledged? Laura Mulvey, in a fresh and original reading, illuminates the richness of the film, both thematically and stylistically, relating it to Welles's political background and its historical context. In a lucid and perceptive critique she also investigates the psychoanalytic structure that underlies the film's presentation of Kane's biography, for once taking seriously what Orson Welles himself disparagingly referred to as 'dollar-book Freud.'

In her foreword to this special edition, published to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the BFI Film Classics series, Laura Mulvey focuses on the film's politics, highlighting the contemporary 'rhymes' in Kane's portrayal of a scandal-prone press baron in a time of economic crisis.

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Editorial Review

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This is a brilliant introduction to what many consider to be the greatest American film. Critic Laura Mulvey provides new insight into the creative collaboration of screenwriter Herman Mankiewicz, cinematographer Gregg Toland, and writer-director-star Orson Welles. She sheds new light on the relationship between the fictional Kane and the character upon which he is based, legendary newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst. Mulvey is especially sensitive to the way *Citizen Kane*--and Hearst--negotiated liberal and conservative politics; for her, Kane's psyche mirrors the political unconscious of the United States in the early 1940s. The appendix reprints a press statement by Welles himself in which he describes his reasons for making the film.

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

LAURA MULVEY is Professor of Film and Media Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London. She is the author of *Fetishism and Curiosity* (1996), *Death Twenty-four Times a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (2006), and *Visual and Other Pleasures* (2nd edition, 2010).

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