

Introduction to Film Studies
Prof. Aysha
Department of Humanities and Social Science
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

Lecture No. # 18

Good morning. So we were talking about what is a Canon?

(Refer Slide Time: 00:19)



So, Citizen Kane as a canon is canonical text. We know when a work of literature, when a work of art becomes part of a canon. It means it adheres to certain principles, certain standards and canon, canons are formed not arbitrary but, there is a system, there is a method. And yesterday we are looking at a few books which are canonical anthologies which are anthologies about a canonical text and what text we are looking is film set as text so, Citizen Kane as a canon, as a canonical text. Now Citizen Kane which was made in nineteen forty one produced by Mercury and RKO **Mercury and RKO** and directed and is starring of course, the great Orson Welles, nineteen fifteen to nineteen eighty five, a popularly called the boy wonder of radio and stage.

He was a child **((C))** he had he started talking about films and making films, and acting, and taking great interest very serious interest in theatre at from a very young age. And he

short in to the lime light with a live radio broadcast of H. G. Wells novel, The War of the Worlds. And this was also the time of the war and he did it so authentically, and a people started running out of fear thought that merchants or some aliens are actually invaded the wall. So, the people ran about in terror and he was so authentic, and his shows became so popular. So, understandably many Hollywood studios got interested in him and started coating him to make films for them. RKO studio was one studio. I mean, do you remember what were the other four studios? We are talking about the forties studio system.

(())

MGM

Paramount

Paramount, Twentieth Century Fox, Warner Brothers. So, RKO studio gave him complete freedom and it was unheard of during that period a twenty four, five years old person who has never heard any cinema experience behind him, and experience of making a movie. And he was given total control and total freedom to make the kind of film that he wanted too.

He started he was always extremely ambitious like let us get one thing very clear about Orson Welles. He had very justifiably high opinion of himself and he was a (()), he was a genius, he was very much aware of that.

So, he was ast was typical of while he started on a very ambitious project which got aborted, because of various factors; Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness later on, it was Apocalypse. Now and we also know when we do Coppola, we are going to discuss how many problems did Coppola face while making Apocalypse. So, Heart of Darkness is indeed heart of darkness and it was not an easy novel to translate to adapt. Herman J. Mankiewicz is another important name that you should know the great screen writer. So, one of the greatest screen writers ever one Herman J. Mankiewicz that you must know about, and other was bet period Ben Hecht **Ben Hecht**. His works he will discuss when we talk about the studio Classic Hollywood Ben Hecht, Hecht.

So, in March nineteen forty Herman Mankiewicz produce the draft called American depicting the rise and fall of a publishing tycoon, rest tycoon Charles Foster Kane. And they revised and they did six versions of that draft and ultimately came up with a screen play or script of Citizen Kane. Welles and Mankiewicz collaborated on that on the draft. Now this is how Citizen Kane was published? We are talking about how canons are formed? So, canons have to be in this day of media and publicity and press. Canons have to... people have to be told that you are going to watch something that you have been never watched before. And three sixty five days in the making and every minute of it and exciting new thrill for you; this is the way it was publicized.

Radios are most dynamic artist the man at whose voice and nation trembled. You know a direct reference to (()) a war the worlds. Now they screened most exciting new stars Orson Welles in the picture Hollywood said he would never make. At finally, he is able to make the kind of picture. Some other publicity lines everybody is talking about it so, very catchy, very sorted the classic story of power and the press. I hate him, I love him; he is a scoundrel, he is a saint, he is crazy, he is a genius; in sort describing Orson Welles. Some called him a hero, others call him heal. It could be Charles Foster Kane; it could also be Orson Welles. So, this is the way you know so, boy genius, boy wonder but also a person, people love to hate.

So, when you achieve such kind of success at such a young stage, young ages, then automatically you generate lot of negative, negativity. So, Citizen Kane everybody is talking about it. The fame factors what the contributing factors into making it in a canon? So, first was the controversy so, this can give you a lot of route for thought.

If film makers generate controversies and quite publicity or generate interest in the products so, it was apparently. And now, it has been established that it was indeed based of the life of American News paper-Barren William Randolph Hearst. It was a very un flattering portrait of the man and as we were talking about it yesterday, hers did his best to suppress the film. He went as far as stopping its exhibition in theatres that he and his friends owned. Hearst his life period eighteen sixty three to nineteen fifty one; Hearst was inspired by the journalism of Joseph Pulitzer and he turn the newspaper into a combination of reformist investigative reporting and laurite sensationalism. So that was Hearst and that is also Charles Foster Kane in Citizen Kane.

Hearst also developed a reputation for employing the best journalist available including Ambrose Bierce, Stephen Crane. Who was a Stephen Crane? Who was Stephen Crane? That is homework, find out or takedown these names: Mark Twain, Richard Hardy Davies and Jack London. You should know where these people are known for. And if they were all on the payroll more or less, we cannot view the word like payroll for Mark Twain of course, but if these people were willingly contributing for Hearst papers, then it must mean that it must tell you, how powerful he must he have been. So Hearst at studied Howard and then took over the San Francisco examiner from his father.

He acquired the New York morning journal another paper and launch the evening journal in eighteen ninety six. So, some of his contributions to journalism is that he sensationalized journalism by the introduction of banner headlines and lavish illustrations. And you could look at his chain of newspapers that and periodicals and magazines which included Chicago Examiner, Boston American, Cosmopolitan and Hopper's Bazaar so, a range of magazines. And that is what we see Kane doing as well in the movie. So, Hearst has actually build for himself a Cassel at (() and this is paralleled in the film (()). (() is of course, a barrow trace a warder name from go black hunt good.

And he called hers called his palace the range and in the in the movie citizen Kane, again there is a reference to the Ranch. Do you remember his second wife Susan? She lives in a place and that place has been gifted to her as alumni by Kane and it is also called Ranch. And one interesting facet about his journalism was that he believes not just in investigating or reporting news but, also in creating news.

And this is something very interesting that a magazine and news paper owners not just reporting but, also creating news. Of course, we know what it means and why it is done? So such was the impact and influence of Hearst that at one stage movie industry got terrified by the negative publicity; that Hearst was generating about the film. So RKO was even offered money to burn the negatives of the film, do not release the picture at all cinema theatres are aware already telling you, where ever not took exhibit the film. And after the release it achieved limited distribution, because it was and this is important boycotted by territories owned by the big five studios. See studio control is extremely important and the biggest studio, big five studios were of course, MGM, Fox per amount and Warner brothers.

So RKO was alienated in this battle, because all the distributing territories were owned by studios and the big five, big five other for studios decided to boycott the film. Definitely, it must have we are talking about those days when Television was not such an important for us. So parallelize between Hearst and Welles both considered child geniuses.

At the time of Citizen Kane, Hearst powers are already on declaims, he was seventy six; Welles of course was on the raise twenty five. Both were upstairs with success in the profession of media. And Welles of course got very ambitious and felt that Hearst would not be able to do much damage to him, but he was wrong to a large extent. See remember our citizen Kane as we were discussing yesterday, it often features and the best greatest film ever made list. It is a part of a canon but, that reputation came much later and we have been talking about that quite frequently when did that reputation happened? Not when not exactly, when it was released, not immediately after it was released, because the campaign against it was so strong.

Many people never bothered with the movie. It was it did not even find a decent release; it did not have a very good run at the box office. We are not talking about the show lay here which was an instant success. So, when do we have been talking about it quite frequently in this class, who were the people who established Welles? The French newer, you see when the (()) people like (()) and people like (()) they started taking interest in Hollywood cinema. After the war and after certain period when Hollywood cinema was making his presents felt in France, in Europe. So that was the time when Welles got noticed not before that.

Otherwise every attempt was made to finish him. So, another major reason for its fame and this is more abide and it has got nothing to do with the controversy. So the filmic qualities of the picture it is indeed and excellently made film. Even today if you watch it, they never a dull movement there; it is extremely fast passed very well directed. And some great performances so, deeply innovative in several ways for example, the way he uses perspectives, use of deep focus. That is increasing the field of depth on screen. Taking the perspective away from centrality of image, what do you understand by centrality of image or centrality of image?

Focusing on a simple entity,

Exactly, deep focus gave him the liberty to focus on other images as well. So, centrality is only on one object or one person was taken away. So what he actually did was to break certain narrative traditions of Hollywood. Although I am very sure he did set out exactly to do that but, he was such an innovator. That it all happened very naturally to him. So, there is a story although Hollywood always believed in when we do classic cinema, classic Hollywood you have to understand something. Hollywood always believed in one credo and that was a style should never out shine story. But, Citizen Kane is one movie where style does out shine a story.

Although there is a story, the movie opens and if you have watch the movie you remember, how it opens with a dyne Charles Foster Cane in his a (()) is her state castle. And his last words are famous, glass weds rose bud. A journalist is assigned you know it is a very un-melodramatic sequence or he would dies he is in his seventies or late seventies and he just dies. So, a journalist is assigned to investigate the meaning of his dyeing words and who are the people who have heard the dyeing word. We are told that there is a nurse and there was a butler, we never get to see the butler there. But we have told that the butler knows that those were the dyeing words Kane serenade and this is the place where we are taking through very laggardly.

Camera movement Kane, a dyeing Kane while he attire his last words, he is holding a bowl a glass bowl which has an image miniature cottage light thing covered in snow and what does it mean? It is quite metaphorical his childhood, hacking back to his childhood. That is where he belonged. This is the place where he comes from. Half hour away before, he was a given away by his parents to be raced by a he has we are given a plot. There is a back story and in sort we are told that his parents are very poor. They run very modest in some where did down in America but, he suddenly comes into huge inheritance. And one condition is that the boy should be taken away from his parents and he should be raced by a certain group of people and his gradients are a group of bankers. And they are the people who control his inheritance and they are the people who have a complete authority or control over him. And they had they can race in the way they want away from his parents. And his last words a rose bud they have a connection to his childhood.

So while he dies in that glass bowl falls in to a million of pieces and then we are invest the journalist we never see his face very clearly. That is, this is very interesting. We

never get to see the journalist who's investigating rose bud very clearly. Never see his face very clearly. So, the first person he meets his second wife, Kane's second wife Susan. She is an alcoholic and she lives very lonely on a place called a Rancho, the Ranch. During his investigation the cause of investigation, he also meets burn Stephen Kane's collaborator in launching Kane's first news paper The Enquirer. He also meets (()) played by Joseph Cotton, Kane's best friend and also a (()) critic.

The journalist also come in contact with a Kane's butler Raymond who reveals details of Kane's life after Susan had left him and now, you must know that this device narrative device was followed in velvet gold mine. But, hard hints where Christian bail, a very young Christian bail investigates a death or suicide murder of a popular rock star of the British sixties cultural scenario (()) and who else? Good, so narrative structure is important. Journalistic what his find on screen is a journalistic reconstruction of Kane's life what we get our fragments from here and there about Kane. And then, how journalist read that this investigator not just exactly investigator but, the journalist who is bring the case whose bring the reporting? He reconstructs Kane's life.

A series of witnesses with Kane associates gave us multiple perspectives on Kane. You can ask zoom that this movie would have been an influence on [FT] multiple perspectives. And this kind of device, you know that there is no fixed or stable truth. This was a device which went on to inform all works by Welles which is the illusionary nature of images and the difficulty of discovering the truth.

And this is something you find in most of his works including another popular film, The Magnificent Ambersons. So we get to know about his childhood lose, the time when he was taken away from his mother. And you can perhaps say a child playing in the background very clearly depicted. So he is an entity on which you are focus so, taking the focus away from the centrality of image that is what I was talking about using deep focus treatment. And you can also see the child through the window playing in the snow so, those happy child would deal and that is what he remembers when he looks at that glass or crystal ball at the end of his line. He establishes the enquirer and looks at the image of Orson Welles, what kind of an image is this?

Ambition,

Ambition in what way, I mean I am talking about the camera angle. The way he is projected is not very straight forward. There is an angle he entered.

(C)

Perhaps focus of attention, focus of attention surrounded by stacks files of his creation, something he is obsessed about when we were doing montage, we watch the same. He was first married to the family not in president's knees and how as the distance between them go? The distance between that dining table also increases, remember that scene and how so that famous montage. So they gift apart and this is very symbolically suggested through the scene at the dining table, he starts having an extra marital affair with an actress, a stage actress. And once he is caught by wife, he decides to divorce his wife.

And marry Susan who is a struggling actress and then what the outcome of this marriage? Who remembers the movie? Well, you know he was an ambitious man so, he does not like his wife to remain a nobody, and he was once married to the knees of the president when he does not want his second wife to be a little miss nobody. So he encourages her plan or her ambitions or becoming a grand or great opera singer and even builds an opera house for her. But, the tragedy is that she does not live up to the expectations. It is just does not have it in her. The marriage crumbles because of his ambitions for her. She is not that ambitious that she is first to be ambitious and then his gradual. But, the consistent disappointment in her and the marriage crumbles, she turns into an alcoholic and ends up lonely in the place called El rancho.

We are also told about Kane's political ambitions (refer time: 26:00) and political career and this image of famous image from Citizen Kane, it tells you a lot about the man's megalomania. His own image looming large in the background while he points towards it so, larger than life persona and entire world should revolve around his ambitions and his aspirations. When the end comes, he is left alone in his own palace and you see multiple images and another beautifully shot. Multiple images and this was another very in a personal favorite camera or cinematographic style of Welles. He made another popular movie called the Lady from Shanghai with Rita Hayworth in which she uses multiple images of Rita Hayworth in the film.

So, very innovative movie, lots of images which are scenes which were quite experimental and innovative for those days and the mystery of Rosebud remains

unsolved. What comes across this? Journalistic reconstruction of the man's image, he was like this multiple perspectives on the man. But, what was rose bud? No one ever guessed you know, except the audients and what do we see? He is getting borer the sludge there the boy use to play with. When he was with its (()) and that is the and people said this is one of the worth less item, lets dispose of this. For him that was his life. Although he has amassed so much of wealth and curious and priceless pieces of art, works of art from all over the world.

So, at the end when people take stoke of his wealth. This is one thing that is considered useless and let us throws it away very ironic. Other great works by Orson Welles, The Magnificent Ampersands. Would you like to comment on that anything? Any scene you remember from Citizen Kane? Let us talk about it; I am just presuming that you at least aware of the film except The Montage that we watch the other day. Other scenes from Citizen Kane, which spring to your mind Cauvery,

Ranjith

In the beginning, when they are describing splendid (()).

[FT] all sorts of things are there. So, they are taking you know very leisurely across the street, a street. Anything else you would like to remember or talk about?

He buys all the papers and changes the reviews about Susan's performance that shows his power action. .

That was his...

That shows his power like how you buy all the News papers and changes the reviews of Susan. So, that is enough too.

So, regime the review for Susan, a Susan at one point is given very negative reviews. And she is a very (()) singer but, he buys the news papers and for... And that is the point of can dispute between (()) and him. Because he forces (()) because his best friend who has a certain credibility as a critic and when he tries to buy his friend over his wife for his own personal ambition. Then there is a rift between the two, good observations. At Touch of Evil, any commands on that.

(())

A lengthy shot, a long take...

(())

Charlton Heston and Janet Leigh were Orson Welles himself plays a detective with ambiguous morals, walking with a walking stick. So, it considered one of the best film knower's of all time, A Touch of Evil. How many of you have watched A Touch of Evil? Read which aims at mid night is a reworking of Shakespeare's Macbeth. He also made Othello, The Lady from Shanghai, (()) that is one of his later film and directed films. But if you go to the IMVU, you were finding a whole list of films in which he acted. So, he was an actor; he remains an actor for a very long period of his life. So, Hollywood finished him off for a variety of reasons, particular the most important reason was his own ambitions.

He would not toe the line and you are as good as your last success in movie business specially beware the stakes also high and when your films do not bring the returns. But you still want to do things your own way when it means struggle. So, that is what happens to Orson Welles however his reputation loses on base basically based on Citizen Kane. Also The Magnificent Ambassadors is a very notice noted notable very worthy film worthy successor to Citizen Kane, Touch of Evil. And the Lady from Shanghai, because of star presents of Rita Hayworth was a reasonable success as well.

So Orson Welles left America in the nineteen fifties like Chaplin. He too was accused of being a communist and he was blacklisted during the McCarthy period. Do you remember any notable names from the McCarthy period that was also blacklisted?

(())

(())

(())

Charlie Chaplin the other they were talking about the Charlie Chaplin. (()) actually named names but, the Charlie Chaplin was just blacklisted and he had to even exile Welles too. He returned once that period subsided but, could never achieve the same

heights. Because the world had changed by that, there were entire movie universe had changed by the time he returned to Hollywood. So, he could never attain the same degree of freedom and success, and he just smashed on mainly as an actor. His legacy, what are the things we remember him for? So, these are his contributions.

First, the use of deep focus and a very innovative use of montage, I may not be perhaps being able to do Battleship Potemkin with you. But, in battleship Potemkin we have one of the earliest examples of brilliantly done montage which is that scene Odessa step. How many of you do not know? I get lot of answers here. Other people who do not know about do not know? What happens is, I refer to it once during one of the earlier classes when there is massacre of innocent people by the shots Soldiers.

And all the entire sequence takes place on this grate huge Odessa steps and we were also talking about intersexuality, inter textual reference. So, the scene was beautifully eluded in which great movie, not too old? I was watching that scene this morning on you tube. It is very fresh in my mind. It is homage to ((())). God Father is but, God Father does not have any step sequence; that is a baptism massacre. Remember while ((())) Coppola is getting deputized; ((())) Coppola is actually the baby who gets deputized. And so great montage, but not the one I am talking about. This is the direct reference massacre taking place on steps; great movie, wonderful star cast Brain De Palma. Does it mean to you anything to you? Referencing what battleship Potemkin, Odessa steps?

I am surprised, it is The Untouchables. The Untouchables you must remember this. These things are a must for you to know and the scene features Kevin Costner as a sergeant, detective, alertness and a very young very new end you ever seen. It also had Sean Connery in his only one and only Oscar winning performance.

((()))

And Robert De Niro, Al Capone. Certain Chicago during the prohibition period nineteen thirties so, Robert De Niro playing Al Capone one of his pure negative roles, Kevin Costner and Sean Connery are the heroes. And they replicate the Odessa steps, the montage. There is no montage in Coppola, Brain De Palma narrative structure, reconstructing a personality, reconstructing a series of events. That is one thing that that is a legacy of Orson Welles.

He did not believe in linear, the idea of the concept of linear story telling. Nothing wrong with that linear story telling is of course, I mean look the God Father first part. What kind of a story telling is that very linear, very traditional. What happens to the second part?

(())

He just played around with the narrative jumps back and you remember. Please this is your homework for your long week end; Thursday through Sunday watch God Father part one and part two. Carefully do not look at me, which are discussed. I am giving you something very nice to do for four days. God Father part one and part two that is your homework. Watch the movie, they are going to talk about God the about the God Father to logic as canonical text on Monday. So, narrative structure I am interested in narrative structure of as introduced by Orson Welles and then how people followed him? So, that was his legacy. The Coppola was of course, he belong to the school of Orson Welles.

So, when he was for this is very interesting all of you should know this, that when Coppola was first offered the God Father. It was based on a novel by Mario Puzo. He did not like it; he was insulted deeply offended. He said what this is? I am after all you know, I come from he came from a famous film school not NYU, I think it was UCLA. And they were all trained in the art of cinema and taking somebody else's material. And then adopting it was definitely not his scene, he did not like it; he did not want to do it.

So it was turned down by many people and Coppola definitely did not want to do that while Paramount pictures produced it, remember that. One big studio backing and he was told that if you make the movie, this is the kind of movie which will give you freedom to make any kind of movie later in your life. Therefore, because he could make God Father, because he made God Father the way the studio wanted him to do. God Father second was done his way. So, he played around with a narrative structure, he introduces a new character. Robert De Niro playing a young God Father and that was bravura performance.

I mean Robert De Niro you know state into the spot light. What was what his earlier works were? Only means street not taxi driver; only he got taxi driver while he was still doing the God Father. Because he had done means to it is with (()) and there was this

was a particular gang group of people, all new Hollywood film makers. Francis Ford Coppola, Brand Ipama who else

(())

Of course Lucas, Steve Spielberg that they are they came (()) go back along they and he had already worked in Mean streets. And we should be doing Mean Streets very soon in this class. So, because of that on account of doing Mean Streets, Di Niro got his part in the God Father. And he did a part which is not in the novel and Coppola made it the way he wanted to do. So, again think of the think of Orson Welles influences on the way stories started been told. Of course, changes would not happen all of as sudden. But he had a far reaching influence on a certain group of film makers particularly, the new Hollywood film makers. So, the second God Father is a tribute that school of film making, the first god father is a very traditional film.

Therefore, when he talks about it as a Cannon, we will see how different it is from a movie like Citizen Kane. God Father, the first God Father follows all the rules, all the rules of the game. So, that is how you should think about films you know made connections, comparison, influences. Do not watch movies in a vacuum so, the other day someone was talking about Mani Ratnam's... I was discussing it with my family and they agree with you. All those people have watched the movie. Do you, can you compare it with Mani's other work? Is there any point at where that runs?

(())

The good and bad are very well distinguished between the last two films Ra one and Ravanan.

Do you agree, Swetha you seem to be a fan.

I did not appreciate Ravanan is very but, the story was too much complication (())

So, then it is more the Bombay tradition. In Bombay also there are good people and bad people but, Bombay became a success. Because of you say there was a controversy so the controversy does play an important role in making a movie notable or noticeable. Some other movies which follow Orson Welles school of film making Apocalypse now the second God father, Wall Street. Why do I mention Wall Street? Wall Street after all

has a very straight forward narrative. Greed is good, Gordon Gekko one of the greatest characters ever. Have you watched Wall Street? Please do, please take it down, Wall Street who directed it?

Oliver Stone.

Oliver Stone, Charlie sheen and Michael Douglas

(())

Both actually Martin, Charlie both are present in a as father and son. Martin is the good guy, Michel Douglas won his Oscar for the movie, and you must watch it. And why do we mention Wall Street then? Greed is good, I just give you the clue that the crude

Ambition

Ambition and the pit falls of over ambition and thus the credo Charles Foster Kane lose by too. Perfection obviously, because of the narrative and that is what [FT] remark. Everyone will always ore him everything. That is how influential he was considered.

(())

Again megalomania of the central character, who we see much later in the movie. Innovations montage use of sound, what was smart about Citizen Kane's sound? There lots of overlapping sounds.

People talking over each other thinks happen, you know while some one is talking hear the door shutting with a bang and an echo down the corridor. So these things were never seen I mean now you do not even notice but, there was a time when it was quite very impressive, because of the times there was that was done so, legacy. Any questions, any comments on Citizen Kane

(()) you mentioned over lapping

Exactly.

Which is our common feature is done in cinema

And when did you run cinema happened.

()

We all everything took Orson Welles. If you go by what () have to believe () have to tell us. Everyone knows him everything. So, thank you very much, we meet on Monday now.