FILM 2332 — Understanding Film, Discussion 2

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Question

In *Rashomon*(1950) by Akira Kurosawa, the woman, woodcutter, and Tajomaru each attempt to escape retribution by modifying their story from the truth, but the samurai is dead, and cannot face retribution. Yet, the narration of the film implies that the samurai is also lying. What incentives does the samurai's have to lie?

Commentary

In the film *Rashomon*(1950) , directed by Akira Kurosawa, none of the characters truly have a full picture of the story. Even the woodcutter cannot be easily trusted, not only because of his initial lies, but because of his lack of context of the scenario. This is similar to the narration in *Citizen Kane*(1941) by Orson Welles. While the movie is omnisciently references "Rosebud" early in the film, the journalists seeking its meaning do not know enough about Kane to effectively search. While the *Citizen Kane* reveals information about Kane's major moments in life, it fails to express adequate nuance at each point - namely his most treasured moments. The woodcutter faces a similar dilemma as an imperfect witness. Even his perspective as an outside observer of a single is limiting for the audience, as he is known to lie for his own incentives. The shared lack of knowledge among characters characterize the narrative styles for both films.
In *Citizen Kane*(1941) by Orson Welles, women are often portrayed as dependent and without personality. in the movie, only three female characters who are important to the story are ever shown. Charles Kane's mother, briefly appears only to give away her own son. The failed marriage between Emily and Charles Kane is not shown through any story, but through a montage rather than the full process. Indeed, there is no clear reason why they are married in the first place - the two of them simply are. The most developed female character is Susan Kane, but even she is almost entirely at the whim of Charles Kane's plans for her. More so, despite being worse off from the relationship, after his death, she is shown as an alcoholic, and unable to manage life without Kane. Women as minor characters are also never seen as being independent.