

Kate Winslet and her Rejection of the Stereotypical Woman

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Objective and Methods

The aim of the project is to show how the roles Kate Winslet is casted for relate to her star image. In which aspects are the chosen characters similar to her? Are there differences?

How do the personalities of the fictional characters reflect the personality of the celebrity?

The method used for the project is, on the one hand, a close look at the characters in the films, and on the other hand, having a look at interviews. Furthermore, I draw on academic articles that deal, among other things, with images of women in films.

Clementine Kruczynski



- Her striking appearance and personality make her an unusual woman who contrasts the stereotypical woman, as claimed by Hohenstein and Thalemann
- Her behaviour is often considered as irresponsible and reckless which illustrates her independence and self-sufficiency
- The way she expresses herself is anything but ladylike
- She devaluates men (Winslet)

“Too many guys think I’m a concept or I complete them or I’m going to make them alive. I’m just a [screwed] up girl who’s looking for her own peace of mind.”
(Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind)

April Wheeler

- Outwardly, April Wheeler is a stereotypical woman from the 50s who puts her family first
- Various conversations with her husband Frank show that she feels trapped in the role of a (house)wife
- There is a longing in her for never having entered into a marriage and never having had children
- She communicates this desire openly in the second half of the film (Winslet)



“Just because you’ve got me safe in this little trap, you think you can bully me into feeling whatever you want me to feel.”
(Revolutionary Road)

Abstract

Kate Winslet is a British actress known for portraying unusual women in movies (Pallardy). In my analysis I will take a closer look on how Kate Winslet’s star image is influenced by the roles she is casted for.

The movies I chose are Revolutionary Road (Sam Mendes, 2009) and Eternal Sunshine of a spotless Mind (Michael Gondry, 2004). I have chosen the films because the women portrayed by Kate Winslet seem very different at first glance, but on closer examination of various scenes they are similar and thus have a similar influence on the actress’ star image.

Hohenstein and Thalemann further claim that women in 2000s to 2010s movies rebel against the stereotypical woman. The rejection of this stereotypical woman is also illustrated by the characters.

Based on my results of analyzing the characters, I will have a look at to what extend Kate Winslet’s roles influence her star image.

Rejection of the stereotypical woman

1. The Resistant Woman

- According to McRobbie (4), the resistant woman is characterized by the fact that she goes against social norm by openly showing her flaws and imperfections
- Both April Wheeler and Clementine bring their weaknesses to the fore.
- Clementine deals openly with a mental illness that is not accepted in society
- April openly communicates her wish never to have become a mother.

2. The Difficult Woman

- According to Hohenstein and Thalemann, the difficult woman is a complex character
- The Complexity refers to their personality traits, such as intense emotionality or impulsivity
- Both traits can be found in Clementine as well as in April

3. The unruly woman

- Petersen (2) describes the unruly woman as a woman who steps out of the boundaries of the „good“ woman and in doing so is labelled as too loud, too fat etc.
- The transgression of those boundaries can be found in April and Clementine, especially in the way they express themselves
- They communicate openly about what they dislike in their role as a woman, what makes them unruly

How do the roles she is casted for influence her star image?

Her roles show a clear rejection of the traditional image of women but does she reject the female ideal as a celebrity as well?

- She used to be seen as the embodied perfectionism of a white English woman
- Over time, her body has become “fuller and more sexualized” (Redmond 130)
- This led to her challenging the image of the perfect white woman (Redmond 131)
- Redmond considers her to be a „problematic fit“ (135)
- Yet Kate Winslet communicates openly about her body and body issues in general.
- She claims herself to be someone who rejects the Hollywood beauty standard (Jany)

In conclusion

- Kate Winslet often represents women who embody a rejection of the traditional woman
- This rejection can be represented by appearance, behaviour etc.
- She rejects the beauty ideals of Hollywood and embraces the authenticity and femininity of women

Thus, both in her films and as a celebrity, she consistently rejects a stereotypical image of women.

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