An Insight into Kate Winslet: Five Time Academy Award Nominee

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by

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Abstract

As I am about to embark on my career as an actor, it is helpful to understand how actors I admire approach their work. Much like myself, Kate Winslet has been acting since she was a child. She began her professional career in her teens, and has since built an impressive body of work as well as a firm understanding of her place in the industry of Hollywood. In order to gain a better understanding of her process, which could then inform my or any young actor’s process, I viewed all of her films and read many of her interviews which gave me more insight into her work.

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Kate Winslet, at the age of 31, is the youngest actor to ever be nominated for five Academy Awards. In her career, which has spanned about 15 years, she has been nominated for over sixty awards, played the lead in the biggest box office film of all time, and received critical acclaim for almost every film she’s ever done all while refusing to live by Hollywood’s standards. She is an excellent role model for any young actor to emulate. She is an intelligent actor who has a firm grasp on her own acting process. Deducing Kate Winslet’s acting process through researching her educational background, studying interviews of her, and viewing and analyzing her complete body of work can be a valuable learning tool for an actor beginning to develop their own personal process in preparation for a professional career.

Kate Elizabeth Winslet was born in Reading, Berkshire, England on October 5, 1975 to Roger and Sally Winslet. Born into a family of actors, Winslet was surrounded by theatre her whole life and, therefore, learned to love it at an early age. Both of her parents and two sisters act. “My older sister does a lot of theatre, my younger sister has just been cast in two independent movies. I have tremendous pride for both of them, because they are absolutely great,” (Braun). Winslet’s maternal grandparents ran the Reading Repertory Theatre, and her uncle Robert Bridges was a fixture in London’s West End theatre district. Though she does at times feel guilty about being so successful when her sisters aren’t, she says her whole family is incredibly supportive of one another (http://www.discoverkate.com/Articles/categorias/features-interviews/page/2/). She was raised in a very open environment.

“‘Not anymore, but certainly when we were growing up, my mum and dad were hippies,’ [Winslet] recalled fondly. ‘We’d go to music and dance festivals with them, run around in dirty little dresses with no shoes, get really scruffy and just be what we were: kids,’” (Strauss).
She attended a drama club at Starmaker Theatre Company when she was ten and began acting lessons around the age of 11.

Winslet began attending Redroofs Theatre School when she was eleven. There are two levels at Redroofs, the Independent Day School for ages 8-16 and the Performing Arts College for ages 16 and up. At the Independent Day School, morning classes are academic and afternoon classes focus on the arts (http://www.redroofs.co.uk/). Winslet took dance classes in ballet, jazz, and tap. When Winslet was on the television show “Inside the Actors Studio,” she said she wasn’t a bad dancer overall, but she was best at tap dancing (http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kate+winslet+actor%27s+studio&search=Search). Winslet also took classes in musical theatre, singing/repertoire, and choir practice. She has sung in a number of her movies, and she recorded a song for the soundtrack for the movie Christmas Carol: The Movie (http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000701/awards). As for acting classes, Kate took speech, audition work, text study, and improvisation coaching. She dropped out of Redroofs when she was 16. Though Redroofs is a well-known theatre school, Kate Winslet said in an interview in 1998 that she is unconvinced by acting schools. The school did help with connections, though. She got her first commercial at the age of twelve through the school, as well as a role in a science-fiction series when she was fifteen (Lipsky). Her principal suggested an audition which would become her first film: Heavenly Creatures (http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kate+winslet+actor%27s+studio&search=Search).

To date, Kate Winslet has been in nineteen movies, for most of which she received nominations, awards, and critical acclaim. It was important to view all of her movies to see what similarities, if any, there are in her characters and the progress she has
made throughout her career, possibly informing her process. Included are short summaries of her films, reviews of her performances obtained from the website www.rottentomatoes.com, as well as personal opinions of her performance for each film and any nominations or awards she received, which were obtained from the Internet Movie Database online at www.imdb.com/name/nm0000701/awards. Three of her movies, Plunge: The Movie, Romance and Cigarettes, and All the King’s Men, are not included because they are unavailable to rent or buy.

Kate Winslet’s first film, Heavenly Creatures, was released in 1994, and she received much acclaim for it. The movie is based on a true story and revolves around two teenage girls in 1950’s New Zealand. Juliet Hulme (Winslet) is a bright, energetic girl who meets Pauline Parker (Melanie Lynskey) at their all-girl school. They become best friends, and their parents begin to worry they are too close. Pauline hates her mother, and when she tries to keep Pauline from seeing Juliet, the two girls plot to kill her. Most reviews of Winslet’s work in this film praised her. Ted Prigge said, “Winslet is jaw-drop amazing in her performance...her performance is full of energy, life, and depth.” A review by Joey O’Bryan said, “Winslet’s turn as Juliet is so rich and lively that it’s hard to believe it’s her first feature film debut.” It is impressive to watch Winslet in this film and realize she was only seventeen when it was made. She already displayed a depth and commitment which some actors twenty years her senior do not have. She was energetic and never seemed to hold back. At times, it felt as if she was teetering on the line of believability and over-acting, but she never crossed it. She received the Empire Award, UK for Best Actress, the London Critics Circle Film Award for Actress of the Year and the New Zealand Film and TV Award for Best Foreign Performer.
Kate’s second film, *A Kid in King Arthur’s Court*, was released in 1995. It was a children’s movie and not very well received. It is about a boy in the present day who gets transported back into the time of King Arthur. Kate plays the oldest daughter of King Arthur. Though the movie was not well received, Steve Rhodes said, “the only real acting interest in the film is Kate Winslet...Although she does the best she can in this kids’ movie, her part is hopelessly dull.” *A Kid in King Arthur’s Court* was a simple film with no real depth, but Winslet was convincing in her role. Her character was blackmailed into marrying a man she didn’t love while the man she wanted to be with was forced to watch. She showed real distress over her problem and fought back to get what she wanted.

Winslet’s next film, *Sense and Sensibility*, was also released in 1995, and for her work in this film, she received her first Oscar nomination at the age of 19. The film is based on the novel of the same title by Jane Austen. The film takes place in late 18\textsuperscript{th} century England. Two sisters, Elinor (Emma Thompson) and Marianne (Winslet), are trying to find love. Elinor is the practical one, and Marianne is the emotional one. After much confusion and misunderstandings, both end up happily married. The reviews of Winslet’s performance were glowing. James Berardinelli said, “Kate Winslet fits perfectly into the period setting...her youth and energy are perfect for the overly-emotional Marianne.” Winslet definitely epitomized the young, romantic girl who expects wonderful things to happen to her. At times, she was a bit over-the-top, much like in *Heavenly Creatures*, but it seemed to work because the character was so emotional. Director Ang Lee noticed Winslet’s tendency to over-act. “When Winslet read for the part of Marianne, (Ang) Lee was captivated by her ‘bald, raw talent.’ Then
he set about teaching her that less is more, spending more time with her than any other actor,” (http://www.discoverkate.com/1996/09/29/kate-winslet-interview-the-independent/). This is apparent when comparing Juliet from *Heavenly Creatures* and Marianne. Winslet was still very energetic and lively as Marianne, but was a bit more grounded than when she played Juliet. Besides her Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress, Winslet always received a Golden Globe nomination. She won the BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role, the Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Actress, and the SAG (Screen Actors Guild) Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role.

*Jude* was Winslet’s fourth film, released in 1996. It is based on the novel by Thomas Hardy in which a man in late 19th century England moves from his rural town to Christminster in search of a better life. He marries a woman who eventually leaves him, and soon after meets his cousin Sue (Winslet), with whom he falls in love. They begin a relationship and have children, but must constantly move because people disapprove of their union. Most reviews of Winslet’s performance were very positive. Peter Stack said, “Winslet is a sensation in *Jude*...there could hardly be a more inspired choice for this role than the 20-year-old Winslet, who gives the movie its dark yet heroic soul.” The only negative comment, by Steve Davis, is more of a criticism of the writing than Winslet’s performance. “Winslet fares less well, in large part because Sue is a woman of contradictions which aren’t meant to be fathomed.” Winslet did an excellent job of tackling a role with numerous contradictions. She never held back and was incredibly brave to perform some rather graphic scenes in the film, especially considering she was
only twenty when it was made. She made this character vibrant, interesting, and whole, where others may not have been able to see past the contradictions. She won the Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Actress.

After filming *Jude*, Winslet played Ophelia in Kenneth Branagh’s version of *Hamlet*, released in 1996. Hamlet is a young prince of Denmark who is told by his father’s ghost that his father was murdered by his uncle, who subsequently married his mother and became the new king. Ophelia is Hamlet’s love interest who goes insane due to Hamlet’s confusing actions and her father Polonius’ death. Roger Ebert thought, “Kate Winslet is touchingly vulnerable as Ophelia.” Janet Maslin’s opinion was, “As Ophelia, Kate Winslet gives a fervent performance.” Winslet did an impressive job of acting opposite Branagh. It would be easily understandable for a young actress to be dwarfed by acting legends like Branagh and Julie Christie, who played Gertrude, but she was able to go toe to toe with them. The scene where Ophelia goes mad shows just how much range she has as an actress. She is obviously extremely tormented, but she doesn’t just play “crazy.” She still has intentions for everything she does in the scene. She was nominated for the Golden Satellite for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture and won the Empire Award for Best British Actress.

The day that Kate Winslet filmed her mad scene in *Hamlet*, she learned news that would change her life: she got the lead in the movie *Titanic*. *Titanic* is a love story based on the Titanic about Rose (Winslet), a first class passenger, and Jack (Leonardo DiCaprio), a third class passenger. When Rose considers committing suicide, Jack is there to change her mind. From there, they spend most of their time together on the ship, despite the fact that Rose is already engaged to a man she doesn’t love, and her mother
completely disapproves of Jack. When the boat starts to sink, they must try to survive together. Marc Savlov said, “Winslet is so perfectly cast that it’s as though she’s a brand new face.” Steve Rhodes’ opinion was, “Kate Winslet gives a wonderfully captivating performance as young Rose.” Winslet fits perfectly into period pieces, especially this role. She has an air of aristocracy with a sense of adventure hidden underneath. Her chemistry with Leonardo DiCaprio was great, and the audience completely bought into her wanting to leave her upper-class life to be with the man she loves. Not only was Titanic the highest grossing movie ever, it won an abundance of awards. Kate was nominated for the Oscar for Best Actress in a Leading Role, the Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture, and a SAG Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role, among others. She won the Blockbuster Entertainment Award for Favorite Actress, the Empire Award for Best British Actress, and the European Film Audience Award for Best Actress.

After starring in Titanic, Kate Winslet had a choice of almost any big studio film, but she chose two small independent films called Hideous Kinky and Holy Smoke instead. Both films were released in 1999. Hideous Kinky is about Julia (Winslet), a young English woman who moves to Morocco in 1972 with her two young daughters. She is searching for life’s answers from a Sufi, a leader in a mystic tradition rooted in Islam. While in Morocco, Julia meets a Moroccan man named Bilal and falls in love. Holy Smoke is about Ruth (Winslet), a young woman following a guru in India. Her family back in Australia thinks she has been brainwashed and tricks her into coming home where they have hired a “deprogrammer” to help her. The deprogrammer, P.J., and Ruth spend a weekend together in a secluded house where Ruth cleverly manipulates P.J. and
they begin a dysfunctional relationship. While both films did not receive many good reviews, Winslet still shone. Carlo Cagavna said about *Hideous Kinky*, “I can’t give it [the movie] and ‘F’ because Kate Winslet and Said Taghmaoui are appealing performers, particularly Winslet. She is luminous...If you’re a fan [of Winslet] you may wish to rent *Hideous Kinky* just for her.” Robert Strohmeyer said of *Holy Smoke*, “Winslet is positively enthralling in her role, presenting an inspired encore to her 1999 performance in *Hideous Kinky.*” Winslet was captivating in both of these films. Her struggle to raise two children while searching for enlightenment in *Hideous Kinky* really showed through. *Holy Smoke* was the most daring performance of Winslet’s career to date. She was able to be completely manipulative and in control of Harvey Keitel’s character and, at the same time, show vulnerability and innocence. Her level of commitment in both films was impressive, as well as the bold move to be in a small, independent films after the huge publicity she received from *Titanic*.

*Quills*, released in 2000, was Winslet’s next film. The film is about the Marquis de Sade’s last years when he was put in Charneton, an insane asylum. Kate plays a laundry girl named Madeleine at the asylum who sneaks the Marquis’ stories outside the asylum to be illegally published. She is enthralled with the Marquis (Geoffrey Rush) and in love with the priest (Joaquin Phoenix) in charge of the asylum. Rod Armstrong said, “Winslet, a magnificent actress even in mediocre films, is wonderful as the washwoman.” James Berardinelli praised, “Winslet’s performance, while generally low key, is so strong that she is able to stand toe-to-toe with the more flamboyant Rush.” Similar to acting opposite Kenneth Branagh in *Hamlet*, Winslet, who was only 23 when she filmed this, held her own in the scenes with seasoned actor Geoffrey Rush. She is great at choosing
roles that are complex, interesting, and challenge her as an actress. Her work in *Quills* earned her nominations for the London Critics Circle Film for Best British Actress of the Year, and the SAG Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role, among others. She won the Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Actress.

Winslet’s tenth movie, released in 2001, was *Enigma*, a movie based in England during World War II. Tom Jericho (Dougray Scott) is a code-breaker whose ex-girlfriend has gone missing. The girlfriend’s sister, Hester (Winslet), helps him find out what happened. Charles Taylor said, “Winslet…creates a young woman powered by her big brain who doesn’t give a damn whether that turns off men or not.” An unenthusiastic review of her performance by Dr. Frank Swietek was that “Scott and Winslet don’t do much to enliven Jericho and Wallace.” The movie was difficult to follow at times, but Kate was convincing as an amateur sleuth. She confronted every obstacle her character met head on. Even with frumpy clothes and glasses, she was unable to look dull and uninteresting. Her brainy character still exuded charisma and liveliness, a trademark of Winslet’s performances. She was nominated for the British Independent Film Award for Best Actress. She won the Empire Award for Best British Actress and the Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Actress.

Winslet was nominated for her third Oscar with the 2001 film *Iris*. The film is based on the life of British novelist Dame Iris Murdoch who succumbed to Alzheimer’s disease. Judy Dench plays Murdoch in her older years, and Winslet plays a younger Murdoch in flashbacks. “Winslet’s witty, vibrant Iris sells us on the character,” said Bruce Westbrook. Betty Jo Tucker said, “In the role of young Iris, Kate Winslet projects
intelligence, wit, and independence.” Dr. Frank Swietek argues that “Kate Winslet isn’t in quite the same league as the younger Murdoch; she offers an exuberance that seems generalized rather than individual, and never manages to persuade us of the girl’s incipient genius.” Winslet transformed herself for this role. She spent hours watching video footage of Iris Murdoch in order to imitate her vocal patterns, stance, and gestures. (http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kate+winslet+actor%27s+studio&search=Search). She was able execute this seemingly without effort. Winslet’s love for life and exuberance as the young Murdoch made Dench’s portrayal as the lost, desperate Murdoch even more heartbreaking. Along with the Oscar nomination, she was nominated for the Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture, among others. Some of her wins include the Empire Award for Best Actress and the Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Actress.

Kate Winslet continued her work with seasoned actors in her next film The Life of David Gale, where she worked opposite Kevin Spacey. The film is about a professor, David Gale (Spacey), who is adamantly opposed to the death penalty. He is convicted of murdering his colleague and is now on death row. Winslet plays Bitsey Bloom, a reporter who is interviewing him in the last days before his execution. Bloom begins to believe Gale’s claim that he is innocent and investigates the crime. This is the first performance of Winslet’s career that received more negative feedback than positive, including Phil Villarreal’s opinion, “The actress is simply off her game. She tries to channel a burnout curmudgeon, but her delivery is so dry and monotonous she often comes off as bored.” While this isn’t Winslet’s best performance, she wasn’t as bad as the reviews let on. The script and her character were on the generic side, but she was
totally committed in this thriller. Her character was a strong woman who refused to back down. She was convincing as a reporter who would go to any length to find the truth.

Winslet’s next film, *Eternal Sunshine of Spotless Mind*, released in 2004 when she was twenty-nine, earned her the honor of being the youngest actor to be nominated for four Oscars. The film is about Joel Barrish (Jim Carrey), who is having the memory of his ex-girlfriend Clementine (Winslet) erased after he learns she had him erased from her memory. The film takes place both in Joel’s mind while his memory of Clementine is being erased and in the real world where Joel and Clementine meet after they have both had the procedure and don’t remember each other. Kate’s performance received enormous critical acclaim. Jeff Otto exclaimed, “She is electric in the role, as her character goes from exciting to deeply disturbed on a dime.” Peter Sobczynski agreed, saying, “Adding to the power of the film are the two central performances by Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet…it is the best work that she has turned in since *Heavenly Creatures*.” Not only was the film itself beautiful and amazing, Winslet was extraordinary in it. Her character was real, with contradictions and more faults than attributes, but it was impossible not to fall in love with her. She was a complete extrovert who hid her insecurities from the world. Besides the Oscar, Winslet was nominated for the BAFTA Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role, the Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture, and the SAG Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role, among others. Some of her wins include the Empire Award for Best British Actress, the London Critics Circle Film Award for British Actress of the Year. It is her personal favorite performance and is ranked number 81 in Premiere Magazine’s 100 Greatest Performances of All Time.
The same year *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* was released, *Finding Neverland* also came out. *Finding Neverland* is based on the life J.M. Barrie when he wrote *Peter Pan*. Barrie (Johnny Depp) forms a friendship with a widow (Winslet) and her four sons. Philip Wuntch said, “Ms. Winslet digs beneath her role’s inherent chin-up qualities to create a woman of many facets, not the least of which is her devotion to her children.” In most of her movies, Kate plays the rebel. She has this energy about her that naturally fights the rules. In this movie, though, she was more subtle. She has even said that the director, Mark Forster, brought out her most subtle performance to date (http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kate+winslet+actor%27s+studio&search=Search). She still had the vibrancy she brings to every character, but it was more controlled. She carried the weight of raising four boys on her own beautifully. Some of her nominations include the BAFTA Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role and the Broadcast Film Critics Association Award for Best Supporting Actress. She won the Las Vegas Film Critics Society Sierra Award for Best Actress.

With 2006’s *Little Children*, Kate Winslet became the youngest actor to receive five Academy Award nominations. The film, based on a novel of the same name, is about Sarah (Winslet), a suburban housewife completely unhappy with her life, who engages in an affair with Brad, a stay-at-home dad. Mike Ward said, “Winslet’s potent performance has us back and forth empathizing with and then loathing her.” Kim Voynar claims, “Winslet really shines here, as a beautiful, intellectual woman who has somehow lost her way on the road of life’s choices and doesn’t know how to find her way back to herself.” This was by far Kate’s most subtle performance. There were so many layers to her character, and she has an incredible ability to fearlessly reveal her characters’ flaws.
while still making the audience fall in love with her. She was nominated for the Oscar for Best Actress in a Leading Role, the Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture in a Drama, and the London Critics Circle Film Award for British Actress of the Year, among many others. She won the Desert Palm Achievement Award.

In Winslet’s latest movie, *The Holiday*, she plays herself, a British woman living in present day, for the first time in her career. “I’ve never played a modern English girl in a movie,” Winslet said in an interview with *InStyle Magazine*. “It was weirdly more intimidating because it was like, Well, I don’t have an accent to hide behind. I don’t have any eccentric clothing,” (Zimbalist). The movie is about two women, Iris (Winslet) who lives in England and Amanda (Cameron Diaz) who lives in Los Angeles, that swap houses for the holidays. They have both had recent bad luck, so they decide a change in location might help them out. They both meet love interests in their temporary homes. Nick Schager said, “Winslet and [Jack] Black’s credible chemistry partially makes up for the run-of-the-mill characters and implausible situations they’ve been saddled with.” Winslet’s performance was very energetic and fun. This film is a mediocre romantic comedy, but Winslet and Jack Black’s presence make it more bearable to watch. Unfortunately, their scenes are far shorter than the scenes between Jude Law and Cameron Diaz, making Winslet’s character much less developed than it could have been.

This year, 2007, Winslet was given the Tribute Award at the Gotham Awards for her outstanding body of work. To receive an award like that at the age of 31 is an incredible achievement. Unlike many actors who try to be humble about nominations and awards, Kate is very proud not only of her achievements but is equally happy when she receives nominations. “These things really matter to me. It’s an extraordinary
feeling, and I do work hard when I’m making a film. So to get that kind of acknowledgement is incredible,” (http://www.discoverkate.com/Articles/categories/features-interviews/page/2/).

One way to understand an actor’s process is to look at their work and at the choices they’ve made. By analyzing four of Winslet’s most impressive scenes, two from her early work and two from her later work, it may shed light on how she has improved over time. The analysis is simply an assessment of Winslet’s approach to the scenes, not a definite analysis of what she was thinking or feeling. Following are all four scenes typed out. After carefully watching each scene numerous times, the scenes have been marked to show the way in which Kate approaches each scene. The four scenes analyzed are from Heavenly Creatures, Jude, Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, and Little Children.

The basic markings are as follows:

- Her goal of the entire scene is which written at the top.
- A line that signifies the end of each beat. Robert Cohen says, “the term beats has entered the actor’s lexicon as representing individual units of action, which...means those short units in which that actor employs a single tactic,” (Cohen 225).
- Within the beat is the tactic she uses to obtain her goal. Cohen defines tactics as “strategies of human communication...Characters pursue their goals just as real people do...they argue, they persuade, they threaten, they seduce,” (Cohen 34, 45).
- Accompanying this paper is a DVD of all four scenes, as well. It is much easier to understand the analysis of the scenes after watching them.
Heavenly Creatures

Juliet, listening intently to coming from behind a bedroom door. Juliet's hand reaches for the door handle. The bedroom door flies open... Juliet quickly flicks on the light. Hilda and Walter sitting bolt upright in bed! A tray of tea sits on a bedside table.

JULIET
The balloon has gone up!

HILDA
What on Earth are you talking about? Mr. Perry is ill... I've brought him a cup of tea.

WALTER
Would you care for one, Juliet?

JULIET
Don't try and fob me off! It's going to cost you a hundred pounds, as I'm blabbing to Daddy!

Hilda looks at Walter, appalled. She looks Juliet square in the eye.

HILDA
Mr. Perry and I are in love, Juliet.

Juliet's eyes widen at this unexpected confession.

WALTER
Hilda!
HILDA
Your father knows about us. Until other arrangements can be made, we've decided to live together as a threesome.

Juliet looks confused. Tears spring to her eyes.

JULIET
(Angry) I don't care what you do! Pauline and I are going to Hollywood. They're desperately keen to sign us up. We're going to be film stars!

HILDA
What are you talking about?

JULIET
(Yelling) It's all arranged... we don't need your bloody hundred pounds anyway, so stick it up your bottom! Tactic: Sever ties with mother

Juliet turns and leaves, slamming the door.
Jude

JUDE
I brought you some brandy.

SUE
No glass?

Tactic: Level the playing field

JUDE
It's some in the cupboard. I'll have to clean them.

SUE
Don't worry, I'll drink it like a man.

*She takes a drink.*

SUE (CONT'D)
Ugh!

JUDE
What will they say at the school?

SUE
I don't care.
I'll go back as soon as they're dry.

Tactic: Bait Jude

JUDE
It's late. You could stay here tonight

SUE
I wish I could get warm.
Thank you, Jude.
JUDE
For what?

SUE
For being here.

JUDE
I'm glad you came to me.

SUE
There's no one else.

JUDE
I should let you sleep.

SUE
Yes. I couldn't sleep.

Why are you looking at me like that?

JUDE
Does it frighten you?

SUE
No. I'm not afraid of any man.

Why not?

SUE
Because no man will touch a woman unless she invites him to. Until she says with a look or a smile, "Come on", he's always afraid. If you never say it or look it, he'll never come. You're the timid sex. Shall I try again...to close my eyes and fall asleep?
Goal: Foster a connection with Joel

**Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind**

CLEMENTINE
*(calling over the rumble)*
Hi!

*Joel looks over.*

JOEL
I’m sorry?

CLEMENTINE
I just said hi.

JOEL
Hi. Hello. Hi.

*Clementine makes her way down the aisle towards Joel.*

CLEMENTINE
Okay if I sit closer? How far are you going?

JOEL
Rockville Center.

CLEMENTINE
Get out! Me too!

JOEL
Really?
CLEMENTINE
What are the odds?
Do I know you? Do you ever shop at Barnes n Noble?

JOEL
Sure

CLEMENTINE
That’s it! I’ve seen you, man. Book slave there for, like, five years now.

JOEL
Oh...I would’ve thought I would remember you.

CLEMENTINE
Jesus, is it five years? It might be the hair.

JOEL
What might?

CLEMENTINE
It changes a lot. The color. That’s why you might not recognize me.
It's called Blue Ruin. Snappy name, huh?

JOEL
I like it.

CLEMENTINE
Anyway, this company makes a whole line of colors with equally snappy names. Red Menace, Yellow Fever, Green Revolution. That’d be a job, coming up with those names.
JOEL
You think there could possibly be a Job like that? I mean, how many hair colors could there be? Fifteen, maybe.

CLEMENTINE
(pissy)
Someone's got that job.
(excited)
Agent Orange! I came up with that one. I apply my personality in a paste.

JOEL
Oh, I doubt that very much.

CLEMENTINE
Well, you don't know me, so... you don't know, do you?

JOEL
Sorry. I was just trying to be nice.

CLEMENTINE
Yeah, I got it.

There's a silence. She disappears behind the seats.
Uses her nasal spray. Appears from behind the seat.

CLEMENTINE (CONT‘D)
My name’s Clementine, by the way.

JOEL
I'm Joel.

CLEMENTINE
Hi, Joel. No jokes about my name.
Oh, you wouldn’t do that; you’re trying to be nice.
JOEL
I don’t know any jokes about your name.

CLEMENTINE
Huckleberry Hound?

JOEL
I don’t know what that means.

CLEMENTINE
Huckleberry Hound! What, are you nuts?

JOEL
It’s been suggested.

CLEMENTINE
(singing)
Oh my darlin’, oh my darlin’, oh my darlin’
Clementine? You were lost and gone forever.
Dreadful sorry, Clementine. No?

JOEL
Sorry. It’s a pretty name, though. It really is nice. It means “merciful”, right? Clemency.

CLEMENTINE
(impressed)
Although it hardly fits. I’m a vindictive little bitch, truth be told.

JOEL
See, I wouldn’t think that about you.

CLEMENTINE
(pissy)
Why wouldn’t you think that about me?
JOEL
I don’t...just... I don’t know. Just uh...You seemed nice, so –

CLEMENTINE
Oh, now I'm nice? Don’t you know any other adjectives? I don’t need nice. I don’t need myself to be it, and I don’t need anybody else to be it at me.

JOEL
Okay.

CLEMENTINE
Joel? It’s Joel, right?

JOEL
Yes?

CLEMENTINE
I'm sorry I... yelled at you. I'm a little out of sorts today. My embarrassing admission is I really like that you're nice. Right now, I mean. I can't tell from one moment to the next what I'm going to like. But right now I'm glad you are.

JOEL
I have some stuff I probably should... I’m writing --

CLEMENTINE
Oh, I’m sorry. Ok. Sure, that’s ok. *(Hits him on the shoulder)*
Tactic: Regain footing
Take care, then.
Goal: Force Brad into a decision

**Little Children**

**BRAD**
When I looked up there and saw you, it was just...Wow. Wow! Thank God you came. I don’t want to go home. I want to stay right here forever. I do. For the first time in my life, I feel like anything is possible. Like I can do anything, you know?

**SARAH**
What are we doing?

**BRAD**
What? What do you mean?

**SARAH**
It’s not real, Brad.

**BRAD**
What?

**SARAH**
This. It’s wrong, and it’s weird. How long are we going to sneak around together? How long can that last? I can’t do this anymore.

**BRAD**
No, don’t say that. As long as I know we have this –
SARAH
Have what? What is this? Look, if that dinner at your house was any indication, you seem pretty happy with your wife. You have the perfect life, and I don’t wanna be the—

BRAD
Stop. Stop. Run away with me.

SARAH
What? You don’t, you don’t mean that.

BRAD
You believe in me. Come on. We’ll go away. Figure this thing out. It’s not weird. The kids are comfortable with each other. I know there’s more to it than that, but let’s do this. Please. Please, Sarah.

SARAH
Oh my God. You really mean it, don’t you?

BRAD
Yes.

SARAH
Ok. Ok. Yes. Yes! Ok! Yes!
There are some key similarities to Winslet’s performances in each of the four scenes analyzed. In each scene, she exudes a vivacious energy that cannot and should not be restrained. Her face is so expressive, and to take away that energy she radiates would lessen her expressiveness. “Winslet is capable of setting up a scene – her character, the relationship with the person she’s talking to and probably even a key plot point – without saying a word. ‘Every director, if you look at her movies, uses her a lot in close-ups,’” says [The Holiday director Nancy] Meyers. ‘You see everything on her face,’” (http://www.discoverkate.com/2006/11/27/kate-in-the-rawl). She doesn’t rely on words to express what she feels. Instead, she understands the emotion she needs to project and uses the words to help express that. Each of her characters is a rebel in some way. Juliet in Beautiful Creatures plots to murder her best friend’s mother. Sue in Jude falls in love with her cousin. Clementine in Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind is impulsive and doesn’t listen to anyone. Sarah in Little Children is having an affair. She carries a sense of controlled rebellion in everything she does.

By looking at the scenes chronologically, Winslet has improved from Heavenly Creatures to Little Children, becoming much more subtle in her work. Even with the outrageous character of Clementine in Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Winslet is much more grounded than in her performance in Heavenly Creatures. Juliet in Heavenly Creatures completely lets her emotions take over her. In Jude, she is able to torment Jude and exploit her power over him without ever leaving her chair. She exudes a power and awareness that allows her to sit there and watch him squirm. Little Children is her most subtle performance to date. The hope that Brad really wants to run away with her is
always in her eyes, but she never allows those feelings to take over. She is cautious and extremely grounded.

After viewing all of Winslet’s movies and reading numerous interviews, there are two key elements that go into her process, the first of which is research. “I’m sorry. It’s just so much fun, the homework,” Winslet said after she read the book Little Children (http://www.discoverkate.com/2007/01/04/dreaming-of-oscar/). Her director had asked the cast not to read it before filming. A reporter from the Philadelphia Inquirer was going to interview Winslet two days before the 2004 Oscars, for which she was nominated for Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, and “everyone else is getting their goodies and being primped...and where’s Kate Winslet? Sitting in an empty office building, all alone, with the book for All the King’s Men in front of her, completely dog-eared, marked up, going through it...She is looking for something, always, and absolutely convinced that she should find it,” (Rea). While filming Titanic, she wrote diaries, some of which were published in an article in Vogue Magazine. “Thinking about Rose. She was so young. I need to think about her childhood, her youth and find my way through the 17 years of her life. I’ll never sleep tonight.” When preparing for the role of Iris Murdoch in Iris, she watched as much video footage of the Dame because she wanted to “be everything about her,” (http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kate+winslet+actor%27s+studio&search=Search).

As part of her research, she also pulls events from her own life to put into her characters. She tends to choose roles that speak to her in some way. She loved the role of Marianne in Sense and Sensibility because that character “was very much me at that time in my life – that kind of wanting to pull my own heart out and hold it up against a
gust of wind just to see what it felt like. The sense of passion and adventure…and indulging an emotion. I felt an instant connection," (Rea). After becoming a mother, she felt a connection to the character Sylvia in Finding Neverland. “Half of her, I felt I instinctively knew how to play,” (Oei). For Little Children, “I did, subconsciously, draw upon things in my own life. With Sarah, I’d consistently find things from way back, from when I was very young, things I wasn’t even necessarily digging for, which just kind of happened into the character,” (Goodwin). By initially feeling a connection to a character, it’s easier to commit fully to the character, which Winslet has shown.

Winslet writes everything down in her scripts and journals. She tries to build a history for each character. She thinks about how they walk, what they eat, how they were as a child, what their relationships were like with their parents and siblings, their education, and many other things so that she can create a full person on screen (http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kate+winslet+actor%27s+studio&search=Searc). “The one that is absolute hieroglyphics and gobbledygook is my Eternal Sunshine script…It just has everything: lines and graphs and bits, trying to keep track of the different memories…For my Little Children one, I had to get a bigger file, because there were so many extra pages. I was thick with stuff,” (Rea). By having everything written down, it’s easier for her to wrap her head around the character and the world being created.

The second part of her process is her fearlessness to try anything. She says that “As an actor, I like being pushed to extreme places,” (Gritten). When Kenneth Branagh asked her to be Ophelia in his version of Hamlet, she thought that she could not possibly do it, and that is why she took the role (http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=
kate+winslet+actor%27s+studio&search=Search). She has said of how she chooses her roles that “after each movie, I always think, how different can I possibly be?...I make a decision based not on how much money I get paid or how much exposure I would get, but based on, is this going to challenge me, is this going to inspire me, and is this going to make me love my job more than I already do?” (Matzer Rose). She says that she is sort of a masochist. “I never believe I’ve done my job properly unless I go home feeling that I’ve suffered,” (Lipsky). “Because I’ve got that fire inside of me, I’ve so got to be a part of a good film, and I’m just absolutely determined to do that. I’ll do anything I possibly can to try and make it happen,” (Strauss). This passion for her work allows her to choose roles that are completely out of the mainstream and even, at times, controversial. That passion clearly translates on the screen. Winslet has also been lucky enough not to be typecast like many of her fellow actresses. She does not enjoy playing the girlfriend or the damsel in distress. Because of this, “Winslet is somehow free to explore the outer ambiguities of femininity. And in doing so, she has become one of the most intriguing performers that this country has produced,” (http://www.discoverkate.com/2006/11/02/times-online-interview/).

What is so great about Winslet’s process is that she allows it to change depending on the character. She does not have strict rules that she lives by. For the part of Sue in Jude, Winslet got to a point where she had read so much, and she felt she couldn’t theorize about it any more. She threw all of her research out and just began writing, which she still does for every movie. She decided she had to leave a lot of character up to chance (Inside the Actors Studio). For her role in Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, “Winslet realized the best way to prepare as the impulsive Clementine was to
remain unprepared. To keep a sense of quickness about her, Winslet took up kickboxing encouraged by Gondry’s suggestion of improvisation… ‘I wanted to be prepared for anything he would throw at me and meet his every request. In not preparing, I was more able to do that because I never had a fixed idea of who she was. The reality of Clementine was she would have tried anything once.’” (Oei). She has standard ways of getting into character, but she is not afraid to throw that out the window and try something new.

Everything Kate Winslet does in her process is exactly what the professors at Ball State have been teaching. It is imperative to do the research, to find a back-story for a character. Always reflect on any rehearsals or performances to improve. Write journals. Push yourself beyond what you think is possible. Do not let insecurities get in the way of a good performance. Winslet takes all of the research she does for a role and tries to make the character seem as whole as possible. When doing emotional scenes, she tries to put herself in her character’s predicament or state of mind and try to find what the character is feeling in her (http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kate+winslet+actor%27s+studio&search=Search). When she feels like she just cannot get to the emotional state in which she needs to be, she first admits it, and says that helps her purge her feelings of self-doubt. Then, she goes off by herself for a while and listens to music I hopes of getting to that emotional place. What also seems to help is taking a picture of her daughter on set with her and looks at it (http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kate+winslet+actor%27s+studio&search=Search). Everything Winslet does to prepare for a role is exactly what I aim to do, though I’m certainly not as successful.
Finding out that her process is similar to the one I have begun to create makes me feel as if I’m on the right track.

Kate Winslet is different from many film actors working today. She doesn’t care about making big budget movies or being in every magazine. She cares about the work. She said in an interview that after Titanic, “I made a decision to do something smaller. I needed to remind myself I was doing this job for a reason – because I love it. I could have done a lot of big films, raked in the cash and forgotten that it’s not about being a film star, but trying to do good work,” (Gritten). When asked for advice about becoming an actor and the hardships to be faced, she said, “Stick with it, love what you are doing and never give up. Let me tell you, when I was young all my teachers told me if I was going to act I could only play the fat roles, the fat girlfriend, the fat roommate and it took all I could to not listen to them and do what I knew I wanted to do with my life, so if what you want to do is act, if that is what is in your heart, you do it. Never give up, no matter what anyone says. And you will succeed,” (http://www.discoverkate.com/2005/02/04/sag-conversations-with-kate-winslet/). About how she’s grown as an actor, she says she has learned, “It’s important not to do everything. It’s so powerful in a scene where you just do nothing...And that’s something I’ve really learnt about through working – my motto for a long time has been: Don’t act, be,” http://www.discoverkate.com/1996/09/29/kate-winslet-interview-the-independent/).

Though Winslet has received critical acclaim throughout her career, she still has insecurities. When she was filming Titanic, she wrote diaries, some of which were published in an article in Vogue Magazine. “I’m very tired and I need to get some sleep. I feel smelly, fat, ugly, talentless and uncommitted, frightened, lonely, nervous, mad and
we haven't started shooting yet. If it's not rehearsals, it's weight training; if it's not etiquette, it's voice coaching. By the end of this film, if it's not suicide, it'll be an asylum,” (http://www.discoverkate.com/1997/12/01/kate-winslets-titanic-diary/). She also says that she hates watching herself because she is afraid her acting is terrible. “I'd rather be oblivious and that way I could still try to get better, as opposed to being depressed about how crap I was. Which is a really twisted thing to say. But it's true. It's confronting. Weirdly, it's a slice of yourself you're displaying to the world,” (http://www.discoverkate.com/2005/12/08/winslet-afraid-of-being-awful-actress/). It's reassuring to know that such an accomplished actor still has insecurities about her work but doesn’t allow them to affect her work.

Kate Winslet is someone to look up to outside of acting, as well. Throughout her career, she continually has been judged on her weight. “As a chubby adolescent, she was tagged with the cruel nickname of Blubber. ‘I used to be so hung up about it,’ admits Winslet. ‘I’d lift up my top and I’d be looking at my waist and I’d be panicking. I finally realized that I was spending about 90 percent of my day thinking about my body, and I thought this is just so boring,’” (Matzer Rose). She refuses to live by Hollywood’s standards of being thin. In fact, she is very vocal about the negative effects that unrealistic portrayals of women’s bodies in the media have on girls and young women. “Well done, everyone! Well done! Really clever of you to breed a whole new generation of anorexics. Excellent! You’re not educating these young women about the world, about poverty, about the environment or about anything that’s interesting. You’re educating them about what lip gloss to use, which clothes to wear. Brilliant!” (“Blast of Fresh Air” Times Online).
Today, Winslet is proud of her body the way it is. When talking about her nude scenes in *Little Children*, she said, “I’ve had two kids, and every woman out there knows that when you’ve had a child your body just doesn’t go back to normal. I have lots of stretch marks and all the rest of it, and I’m sort of proud of all my battle wounds,” (http://www.discoverkate.com/2006/11/27/kate-in-the-raw/). “It is very important to me that women on film are portrayed as real women. Women that women in the audience can relate to and think, ‘I’m like that; that looks real; that looks like me and all my friends,’” (Goodwin). People have responded positively to her opinions. “I’m tremendously flattered to be looked up to in that way, and I feel an enormous responsibility to stay normal and true to myself and not conform and all those things. You know? To be healthy. And normal. And to like to eat cake,” (Braun). She’s not the type to conform into what other people think she should be, and that’s extremely admirable.

Kate is also extremely good at managing her priorities. Having two children, “Winslet prides herself on being, above all else, a good mom,” (http://www.discoverkate.com/2007/01/04/dreaming-of-oscar/). Her husband, director of *American Beauty* and *Road to Perdition* Sam Mendes, and her take turns working so one of them can be at home with the kids. She keeps her personal life private. She doesn’t allow fashion magazines in her home, and she tries to tell her kids that autograph seekers are people who want directions (http://www.discoverkate.com/2006/11/27/kate-in-the-raw/). She has made a life completely outside of Hollywood. “Living in New York and organizing playdates for the kids has afforded the genial actress a group of friends outside the film industry. ‘That’s been really wonderful,’ she says, ‘to develop a social circle separate
from our jobs.’ Juggling work, motherhood and stardom is, it turns out, something Winslet excels at. ‘You have one life, and you have to make the most of it,’” (Zimbalist).

Kate Winslet is a well-rounded person with incredible talent. In her fifteen years as an actor, she has been nominated for over sixty awards, been the youngest actor to ever receive five Academy Award nominations, and refuses to fit into any mold the industry may try to put her in. “To me it’s not some sort of career ladder, it’s all about the work, and as long as I carry that mentality with me I should be ok.” (http://www.discoverkate.com/1996/09/29/kate-winslet-interview-the-independent/). She has a passion for acting that absolutely comes across in her work. She mixes spontaneity and fearlessness with hours of research when taking on a role. She is not afraid to admit when she doesn’t have the answers or feels insecure. “This seems to be the Winslet method in a nutshell: brilliant casting luck followed by abject insecurity, resulting in work that appears utterly confident, regardless of how difficult,” (Strauss).


