***All About Eve* (Joseph Mankiewicz, 1950) Close Reading Analysis**

**Chapter One: Opening Credits**

1.Describe the opening style of music.

2.How does this music connect the film to the world of theatre?

3. As the opening credits roll, note the leitmotif (musical theme associated with a particular character) for Eve. Describe the style of music that is used and note that it is used for Eve and her activities throughout the film.

**Chapter Two: At the annual dinner of the Sarah Siddons Society, acting’s highest honour is about to be awarded to newcomer Eve Harrington.**

1. What is the close-up of?
2. What could this item symbolise?
3. The next shot is one long continuous zoom out to reveal the Sarah Siddons Society dining hall. What do you notice about the room?
4. The camera cuts to a group of? Info: Addison DeWitt makes references to several renowned actors of the nineteenth century: Helena Modjeska (Polish Actress, known for Shakespearean and tragic roles 1840-1909), Ada Rehan (American actress 1859-1916), Minne Friske (American actress, 1865-1932), Edwin Booth (American actor specialising in Shakespeare, 1833-1893 & Richard Mansfield British actor, specialising in Shakespeare, Gilbert & Sullivan Operas and the Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, 1857-1907). You don’t need to know these all, but American audiences may have at the time and it’s part of the joke that Addison DeWitt makes).
5. What humorous comment is made about the windows?
6. What impression does this give of the ceremony and society?
7. The camera returns to a close-up of what?
8. Then it moves to a medium shot of who? (hint: the voice-over says his name)
9. What does Addison DeWitt believe he is ‘essential’ to?
10. What does his voice-over (VO) say about Karen?
11. Describe the tone of his voice as he is describing Karen.
12. What impression does it give of Karen?
13. The camera then moves to a medium close-up of who?
14. What is Max Fabian doing when the camera moves to reveal a medium shot of him?
15. What type of playwright does Addison DeWitt’s VO say he is?
16. The camera then moves to a medium shot of who?
17. What does Addison DeWitt’s VO say about her?
18. How is her star status emphasised by her actions in this shot?
19. Which words does Addison DeWitt’s VO use to show that he does not think highly of what the Chairman of the Sarah Siddon’s Society is saying?

Vocab: Thespis: was the ancient Greek poet who is credited with being the first actor. This is where the word ‘thespian’ (actor of the stage) comes from.

1. The camera then returns to what?
2. What has the camera just completed? Why?
3. The Chairman quotes Shakespeare’s play Macbeth, when he says Macbeth’s lines; ‘A poor player who struts and frets his hour upon the stage (Act 5, Scene 5), said after he finds out that his wife; Lady Macbeth who thrown herself off the castle walls as she has been driven mad by the guilt she feels over her and Macbeth’s murder of King Duncan). Why do you think he says this?
4. What comment is made about Eve’s age?
5. As the Chairman is singing the praises of Eve, a medium shot shows, who doing what?
6. What does the medium shot of Karen reveal?
7. The camera then cuts back to Addison DeWitt. On hearing which word does he raise his eyebrow?
8. What does the medium shot of Margot reveal?
9. What does this cross-cutting reveal?
10. What does the Chairman say Eve’s dream was?
11. When Eve is announced as the winner, the camera zooms out to reveal the room doing what?
12. When Eve stands to receive the award what type of camera angle is used and why?
13. The two point of view shots (from Addison DeWitt’s perspective) show which two people not clapping?
14. How does this contrast with the previous shot?
15. What type of shot occurs just before the Chairman is about to place the award in Eve’s hands?
16. Why?
17. What compliments does Addison DeWitt list as the camera is focused on Eve? (4)
18. He then goes on to say: ‘Life goes, where she goes. She has been profiled, covered, revealed, reported, what she eats, what she wears, who she knows and where she goes, where she was, and when and where she is going. Eve. You all know about Eve.’ What does this reveal about Eve (and what theme is it introducing).
19. The camera then cuts to a close-up of Addison DeWitt asking us (the audience) a question, which is?

**Chapter Three: Karen meets Eve**

1. The camera cuts to?

2.Whose voice-over is it now?

3.There is then a close-up of Karen starting ‘It’s June now, that was early October.’ What type of transition connects the present to the past?

4.How many months ago, does the film flash back to?

5. The next shot is an establishing shot of what?

6. Whose name is up in lights?

7. According to Karen’s VO how often has Eve been waiting outside the theatre? \_

8. Describe the weather.

9. Describe Karen’s costume.

10.What does this suggest about her?

11.We hear Eve before we see her. What does she say?

12. When we hear Eve say this, Karen is shot behind a what? Could this be symbolic of anything?

13.Notice how Eve emerges from the shadows on the doorway in the lane. Twice a shadow crosses over her face. What could this be symbolic of?

14.Describe Eve’s costume.

15.What could this suggest about her?

16.How many nights a week as Eve seen the play?

17.Notice the framing of the two. Who is the tallest?

18.What do Karen’s actions and gestures suggest about her?

19.How does Eve solicit Karen’s sympathy?

20.When Eve says she would just be ‘another tongue-tied gushing fan’ what is Karen’s response?

21.What is ironic about Eve’s concern about her appearance when Karen suggests that she can meet Margot?

**Chapter 4 : Karen takes Eve backstage to meet Margo in her dressing room with Lloyd and Birdie.**

1. Describe the mise-en-scene of backstage.

2.What comment does Eve make about the atmosphere?

3.What is written on the crate outside Margo’s dressing room?

4.What could this signify?

5.What is Margo acting out when Karen enters her dressing room?

6.Describe the composition of the shot when the four are in the room. What does this suggest about their friendship?

7.Who is in the centre of the frame? Why?

8. What is implied by Bridie question of whether Margo needs a new girdle (corset) in the same aize?

9.Why do you think Mankiewicz shows Eve hearing this comment?

10.Which dialogue suggests that Margo is quite emotional and that Karen can find this difficult at times?

11.What is Margo’s opinion of obsessive fans?

12. How does Margo describe Eve?

**Chapter Five: Eve tells her story to Margo, Karen and Lloyd. Bill arrives to take Margo to the airport.**

1.When Eve is telling her story, comment on the composition of the shot. Who is now in the centre? What may this foreshadow?

2.What does she say which flatters both Margo and Lloyd?

3.Comment on the looks of all four as they listen to Eve (point of view shot from Eve’s perspective).

4.What is re-enforced by the reverse shot (the point of view shot from the persective of the four friends).

5.What is the purpose of Eve’s leitmotif playing on the sound track as she narrates her ‘life-story’?

6.Comment on her observation, that ‘ It got to when I couldn’t tell the real from the unreal.’

7.How does her story elicit sympathy?

8. How do we know that Karen and especially Margo are moved by her story?

9.What is Birdie’s response?

10.Look closely at the mirror, when Birdie rebuts Margo’s accusation that she’s a ‘fifth rate vaudevillian’ (musical actor). Who is watching Margo?

11.What might this suggest?

12.Whose decision is it that Eve should stay?

13.What offer does Karen give to Eve when she says goodbye to her?

14.What does Eve say to Karen as she’s leaving?

**Chapter 6: Eve & Bill discuss his decision to work in Hollywood.**

1. Comment on Eve’s unwavering gaze of Bill as he is snoozing.
2. Why does Eve seem so concerned about Bill going to Hollywood?
3. Comment on the playful banter between Bill and Margot. What does this suggest about their relationship?

Info: Stanislvaski: was a Russian theatre director, who worked in the early 1900s and was the founder of the ‘method’ school of acting.

**Chapter 7: Margo & Eve farewell Bill at the airport; Eve goes home with Margo.**

1. What is Eve’s suggestion?
2. How does this appear to help Bill and Margo?
3. How does it really help Eve?
4. Comment on the composition of this shot as she makes this suggestion.
5. What is ironic comment does Bill make about Eve?
6. What is Margo’s opinion of the theatre?
7. What does Margo say about Eve?
8. What does Margo not want Bill to do?
9. Comment of the moment Eve chooses to interrupt Bill and Margot.
10. What insecurity of Margo’s has Eve just witnessed?
11. What comment does Bill make to Eve about Margo as he’s about to board the plane?
12. There is now a new voice-over. Whose?

**Chapter 8: Eve becomes Margo’s new personal assistant, making herself indispensable both at home and at the theatre.**

1. What does Margo describe Eve as (6)?
2. How is it made clear that Eve is taking over Birdie’s position?
3. What word does Margo use to describe these first 3 weeks when Eve has moved in.
4. Which transition connects the domestic sphere to that of the theatre?
5. Study the close-up of Eve’s face as she watches Margo take her bow. What emotions are evident on her face?
6. Notice the cross-cutting between Eve and Margot. What does this highlight?
7. In the dressing room, what comments are made about Margot’s girdle?
8. Why do you think Eve is re-modelling Margot’s dressing room?
9. What does Margot see Eve do with her costume?
10. What is Eve’s reaction?
11. What is Margo’s reaction?

**Chapter 9: Margo receives a phone call from Bill on his birthday; Birdie expresses her concerns.**

1. How does Bill already know about his party?

2. What does the close-up on Margo’s face reveal when she hears this?

3. How often has Eve been writing to Bill?

4. Bill assumes that Margo is aware of this. Is she?

5. Who does Bill ask after?

6. What is Margo going to have to check with Eve?

7. What action of Margo makes it clear that she is perturbed by Eve’s actions?

8. How do we know she still feels the same way the following morning?

9. Why doesn’t Birdie like Eve?

10. What is Eve wearing when she enters the room?

11. Of what is this symbolic?

12. What is insulting about Eve’s comment that she couldn’t forget Bill’s birthday or Margo would never forgive her?

13. Notice the music that plays when Eve confesses she has sent him a telegram herself (Eve’s leitmotif played in a minor key), coupled with the exchange of knowing glances between Margo and Birdie. What could this foreshadow?

**Chapter 10: Eve has organised a welcome home ad birthday party for Bill on his return from Hollywood; Margo picks a fight with him over Eve.**

1. Note the tone of Margo’s voice-over. What could she smell in the air?

2. How long has Bill been at the party?

3. Without using words, how does Birdie let Margo know that Bill has yet to come up and see her as he is talking to Eve?

4. What is Margo’s response?

5. Comment on the body language of Eve and Bill?

6. Comment on the composition of this shot? Who is paired? Who appears as if on a stage? Why do you think that is?

7. Comment on Eve’s costume. Whose does it echo? Why?

8. Notice the framing of the three characters when Eve approached them? Where is Eve positioned? Why (what could it symbolise?)

9. What is Margo’s main problem with Eve? What negative comments has she made about Eve’s youth?

10. What does Margo insist that Bill stops calling Eve.

11. What does Bill say in Eve’s defence?

12. This argument is interrupted by Eve, however why do we (and Bill and Margo) hear her before they see her?

13. When has this happened before?

14. What joke does Margo make at Eve’s expense?

15. Why is Eve pleased that Bill has offered to make her a drink?

16. How do we know she is happy about this?

**Chapter 11: Karen, Lloyd and Max arrive at the party; Eve is introduced to Addison DeWitt; Margo gets very drunk; she asks Max to find Eve a job in his office.**

1. What comment does Lloyd make about the atmosphere of the party?

2. What comment does Karen make about Margo?

3. What is Margo’s reply when Karen asks; ‘Is it just finishing or just beginning?’?

4. Note the framing of this shot when she replies. Where is Margo positioned?

5. Notice the composition of the shot, when Eve and Addison meet. In what ways do they mirror each other? What could each be thinking of the other?

6. Notice the contrast of Margo and Claudia Casswell. In what ways are they polar opposites (Hint: appearance, colour of costume, professions & personas of Bette Davis and Marilyn Monroe).

7. What comment does Claudia make which reveals the true agenda of Addison’s interest in actresses and possibly Eve?

8. What does Margo offer to do for Max?

9. What favour does she ask of him in return?

10. As Margo discusses her self-doubt with Lloyd listen to the song being played in the next room. What style is it? (It’s called Blue Moon by Rodgers and Hart). How does it add to the sadness of Margo’s words?

11. What is Margo’s main concern within her professional and personal life?

12. What does Margo say she’ll wear to play Cora in Lloyd’s new play?

**Chapter 12: Eve asks Karen to help her get Margo’s understudy role; Addison and Bill discuss the theatre.**

1. What comment does Karen make about Margo?

2. In what way does Eve’s comment that ‘the show must go on’ betray her real ambition?

3. Notice when Karen agrees to speak to Max about Eve becoming Margo’s understudy, that Eve is now standing towering over Karen? What could this symbolise? What is it, in fact the inverse of?

4. Notice the positioning of the characters on the staircase. Why are Eve and Claudia on the lowest rung?

5. What is DeWitt’s opinion of theatre people?

6. Notice the close-up on Eve’s face as Bill discusses the hard work of theatre and how people who do that ‘want to be in the theatre more than anything else in the world.’

7. What does Eve compare the applause of an audience to? Note the close-up and soundtrack as she says this.

8. Notice the cut to Bill and Addison. What is Addison’s facial reaction?

9. What does Eve do when she notices she may have revealed too much of her own ambition?

**Chapter 13: Margo is rude to her guests**

1. What does Karen say to Margo to try and admonish her?

2. What act does Eve put on after Margo goes to bed and Addison comments that it’s a pity they’re going to miss the third act?

3. Notice the close-up of Eve’s face, just before she reminds Karen not to forget about their discussion earlier. What is revealed on her face?

4. Why do you think this scene ends with a close-up of a painting of Sarah Siddons?

**Chapter 14: Margo arrives late for Claudia Casswell’s audition and discovers from Addison that Eve has read, brilliantly, in her place.**

1. How is it made obvious that Margo did not know that Eve was her new understudy?

2. What compliment does Addison say about Eve’s reading?

3. What prediction does he make about Eve?

4. Who else was very impressed by Eve’s performance?

5. Comment on the effect that is produced by framing Margo next to the life-size drawing of her character in Aged in Wood.

6. How has Eve managed to simultaneously flatter Lloyd and insult Margo?

7. How does Addison insult Margo?

**Chapter 15: Margo fights with Max, Lloyd and finally, Bill.**

1. How does Marg immediately show her annoyance with Max?

2. Notice the framing of Bill, Eve and Lloyd. What could this suggest?

3. What does Margo say regarding Eve’s age and the age of the character?

4. Why does Eve back away from Lloyd, Bill and Margo?

5. When Lloyd and Margo are arguing what is between them? Could this be symbolic of anything?

6. Comment on the focus and angle that Margo is filmed from when she is threatening to quit the play.

7. What does Margo say she will not let happen to her?

8. Does Bill believe this is the case?

9. What does Margo say to try and convince him?

10. Why does Margo’s questioning of Bill, that he’s going to see Eve, make him say that, ‘that suddenly makes the whole thing believable’.

11. What point is emphasised by the long shot of Margo on the bed on the stage?

**Chapter 16: After hearing of the afternoon’s events, Karen decides to teach Margo a lesson; Karen & Lloyd and Margo go out of town for the weekend and, on the way back, the car runs out of fuel; Lloyd goes in search of assistance; and Karen and Margo talk as they wait.**

1. This is the second time Lloyd has said ‘Let me tell you about Eve’. What is he saying about her?

2. Whose voice-over now is heard on the soundtrack?

3. What do you think Karen tells Eve when she calls her?

4. What does Margo want to know? (note the expression she uses).

5. What is Karen’s reply?

6. What three emotions does Margo reveal she is feeling?

7. What does Margo fear?

8. What three things does Margo say Eve is?

9. Why is it ironic that Margo is feeling bad about the way she has treated Eve? (Hint: at this moment what is Eve doing?)

10. According to Margo, what do you need to be a woman?

**Chapter 17: On his way to congratulate Eve, Addison overhears her propositioning Bill; he then offers his supports when Bill rejects her.**

1. Whose voice-over is now heard?

2. Notice that like Eve, Addison also emerges from the shadows and takes the same route to the dressing room. Why do you think this may have been done?

3. We see Eve from behind, dressed in Margo’s costume and wig. Who does she now look like?

4. Notice Eve’s sudden transformation from rage to charm when Addison enters the room. What does this make clear to the audience?

5. In what ways does Addison quiz Eve about her past?

6. What comment does he make about pretending to her? What is he implying to the audience?

7. Why does she not give the surname of her ‘husband’ to Addison? ( two reasons)

8. What is ironic about Eve’s comment to Addison, that he take charge? What does it foreshadow?

**Chapter 18: Karen reads Addison’s review of Eve’s performance; Bill and Margo are reconciled.**

1. Whose voice-over is it now?

2. How does Lloyd’s explain the large amount of critics at Eve’s performance?

3. What is the real explanation?

4. What is Eve’s reaction to Addison’s assumption that she will not be going to Hollywood?

5. Now that Eve has successfully upstaged Margo, does she call Karen by her name or as Ms Richards (as she has always done in the past) and why?

6. What is the main implied insult (to Margo) that Addison has made clear through his glowing review of Eve and through the use of ‘her words’?

7. Do you think they are her words? Or has Addison embellished them?

7. What does Margot say she will personally do to Eve? (what does she refer to her as and what is this a reference to?)

Note: ‘de trop’ in French, means too much. This is Karen’s way of saying Margo know longer needs her for emotional support now that she and Bill are back together.

**Chapter 19: Karen and Lloyd discuss Addison’s review, disagreeing on Eve’s motives and whether or not she should play the part of Cora in his new play.**

1. What term does Lloyd use to describe Eve?

2. In what way is Eve ingratiating herself with Lloyd?

3. What term does Karen use to describe Eve?

4. When did Karen believe she become cynical? What is she implying?

5. What is ironic about Karen’s line; ‘just refer all of Miss Harrington’s future requests to me?

**Chapter 20: Karen and Lloyd dine with Margo and Bill who announce their engagement; Addison and Eve are also together at the Club Room.**

1. Note the framing of the shot when Karen receives Eve’s note. What does this echo?

2. What does Margot call Addison? Why?

3. Why does Karen not acknowledge Addison and why do Margo and Bill mock his toast?

4. Comment on the costuming of Eve and Karen. What could this be symbolic of?

5. Comment on the body language and framing when Eve says there is something that Karen can do to help her.

6. How does Eve blackmail Karen to get her to tell Lloyd that she should play the role of Cora?

7. Comment on the framing of Eve and Karen when Eve says she ‘would do a great deal more to get a great part.’

8. Eve tries to manipulate Addison, by telling him she ‘needs him’. What is his reply to this?

**Chapter 22: Karen rejoins her friends; Margo announces she does not want the role of Cora.**

1. What does Margo want as a wedding present?

2. What does Margot refer to Eve as?

3. Notice that Margot and Karen are no longer seen in the same shot. What could this symbolise?

4. When do they again appear in the same frame?

5. What is Eve’s opinion of being married?

6. What does being married, mean she no longer has to do?

7. Why is Karen laughing uncontrollably at the end of this segment?

**Chapter 23: Rehearsals for Footsteps on the Ceiling commence, with Eve playing Cora; Eve manipulates Lloyd; Addison goes to New Haven for the opening.**

1. Note the few extra seconds of darkness that occur before this segment. What could this suggest?

2. What are Bill and Lloyd fighting about?

3. Comment on the positioning of Karen? What does this suggest?

4. What does Karen believe is happening.

5. How does the framing of the scene when she lies awake in bed, emphasise her helplessness?

6. Whose voice-over does it now change to?

**Chapter 25: Eve tells Addison that she plans to marry Lloyd Richards; Addison blackmails Eve into compliance (doing what he says).**

1. When Eve is in control of the situation and informs Addison that she is going to marry Lloyd who is seating and who is standing? Why?

2. What comment does Addison say to Eve about her? (Hint: Karen says this when she first meets her.)

3. When Addison reveals he knows who she really is, from what camera angle is he filmed? Why?

4. From what camera angle is Eve filmed as she lies crying on the bed?

5. Why does Addison believe that Eve and her ‘deserve each other’?

6. Why do you think we don’t see Eve’s face when she agrees to Addison’s demands?

7. Comment on the music that is played in the closing moments of this segment.

**Chapter 25: End of flashback: Eve accepts her award, but does not attend the after-party in her honour.**

1. Comment on the reactions of the thanks she gives her ‘friends in the theatre’. Are they more understandable now?

2. What comment does Margo make to Eve?

3. Why doesn’t Eve want to go to Max’s party?

**Chapter 26: Eve returns to her apartment; she is surprised by a young intruder.**

1. How is Eve’s hatred of Addison made clear when she leaves the taxi?

2. How do we know she plans to stay in Hollywood for as long as she can?

3. What does she immediately do once she takes off her cape?

4. When do we first see Phoebe? What is significant about this?

5. How does Phoebe flatter Eve?

6. What do we see Eve doing? (which we haven’t seen before).

7. In what ways is Phoebe, like Eve did with Margo, making herself indispensable?

8. Comment on the interaction between Phoebe and Addison?

9. What makes us think that her real name is not Phoebe?

10. What advice does Addison give her?

11. What lie does Phoebe give Eve? Why?

12. What action does Phoebe do with Eve’s cape?

13. What earlier action does this reference?

14. The closing shot is of multiple reflections of Phoebe pretending she has received the Sarah Siddons award. What point do you think Mankiewicz is trying to make?