**KEY QUOTES**

**‘Real diamonds in a wig’**

Several times, Bill, who as a director, comments on human experience in the theatre,

attempts to define and demystify the theatre. At this point in the film, he has just

explained to Eve the universality of theatre, and he, Margo and Eve are about to

leave for the airport. These words are another of his comments on the theatre in

which the real and the valuable are caught up in the false. This can be seen as a

metaphor on many levels. Bill, like Addison DeWitt, is a little like a Greek chorus as

he explains and analyses their lives, but at this point he is unable to tell that Eve is

dross.

**‘Fasten your seat belts. It's going to be a bumpy night.’**

Margo says this, partway up the stairs as she turns, and poses for her ‘audience’ of

Karen, Bill and Lloyd. The seething suspicion of Eve which has been growing since

the ‘birthday telephone call’, exacerbated by Bill’s spending time with Eve on his

arrival home, is heightened by the conversation just finished. Her responses to

Karen’s praise for Eve have grown increasingly acerbic. Flying was not as common

in 1950 as it is today, and by using the metaphor of flight, Margo is foreshadowing

an exciting, if dangerous experience. Is she the pilot? She does seem to have made

some sort of decision, even if it is only to get drunk and vent her anger and fear.

‘We are a breed apart from the rest of the humanity, we theatre folk.’

Here Addison DeWitt both affirms his belonging to the ‘theatre folk’, and claims their basic difference ‘from the rest of the humanity’. It is important for him to see himself,

and be seen by others, as different, as special, as superior. His role as critic sets him

apart; his cool control of his emotions most of the time is in contrast to the gushing

emotions of Margo; he does not really seem to have a ‘group’, moving from space to

space alone. He brings his latest protégée, Miss Caswell to the party. She is

obviously seeking a career through powerful men—Addison, and later, Max. Is there

something predatory about an older man attaching himself to young women—Miss

Caswell, and Eve? Eve offers herself to Bill and Lloyd; does she sleep with DeWitt?

Is he asexual—would this fit with his role as an observer? Is he homosexual? Would

Mankiewicz agree with what he says? Isn’t the director arguing for ‘humanity’ in this

microcosmic world?

**‘Without wit. With all my heart.’**

Bill says this as he proposes a toast to his ‘bride-to-be’. Is Mankiewicz suggesting

that wit is heartless? Most of the characters attempt to live according to the dictates

of their hearts; at times they seem to suggest that in creating, in performing, they are

less than human. But Bill and Margo always tell each other of their love, and have

retained what Mankiewicz argues is the important part of their humanity, while Eve

merely uses her ‘heart’ to perform.

**‘Nice speech, Eve. But I wouldn’t worry too much about your heart. You can**

**always put that where your heart ought to be.’**

These are the final words from Margo in All About Eve. They pick up on Eve’s words

in her speech, when she theatrically claims, ‘My heart is here in the theatre—and

three thousand miles are too far to be away from one's heart’.

The Sarah Siddons award to which Margo refers, is used by Mankiewicz as a

unifying thread throughout the film. As a (unworthy?) goal for Eve, it symbolises

success and acclaim; structurally, the freeze-frame bookends the body of the film—

the film is about, essentially, Eve reaching for the statuette. Posed against this

glittering prize is the heart, symbolising the throbbing of life, warmth, human

connection, and love.