

Carlene Faith

December 10, 2010

English 110

Cover Letter

Dear Professor Ferguson,

As a freshman I was scared to enter a college English class and I walked into your class extremely negative. I knew right from the start that I had a very tough time with grammar and spelling. I knew that often in high school this stood in my way, but luckily this semester it didn't. From the many assignments we did and your constructive criticism I was able to gain a lot more confidence in my writing. Although I know that there are still weaknesses I have, I am much more able to realize my strengths. This semester in your class I was able to not only learn a lot about English, film and reading in general, but also about me and what I am in store for in my years to come at Queens College. Through peer revision and self reflection I was able to channel my strengths and weaknesses to make my writing the best it could be. This portfolio is a representation of my best work. It includes many writing assignments that we have done in your class this semester. It includes the final drafts of my peer interview transcript and reflection, my persuasive epistolary essay, a reading response from the blog, my annotated bibliography, my mock debate interview transcript, my kino-pravda script and my film festival program notes. All of my final pieces came together from the way I have developed my writing since the beginning of this course and to showcase my greatest strengths.

From the beginning of the semester we were aware of what we were going to be graded on and what our learning goals were. The first criterion that we were to be graded on was our ability to complete all assignments and readings with diligence on time and to the best of our

abilities. Along with that our participation in class and on the blog would be graded. I think that this category is defiantly one of my strengths. Gordon Harvey said that structure was an element of an academic essay, and structure is something I apply to everything in life. I am a very organized person and deadlines are something I am good at. I am also very good at managing my time, so I was able to be prepared for each class by reading the assignments. I believe that I am very present in the classroom; I like to participate in your class. I felt very comfortable being involved in class discussions speaking my mind. I always had confidence that what I had to say meant something when I raised my hand in your class. I felt that you would accept what I had to say and never consider it useless, as teachers have in the past. In this area I did have weaknesses as well. I missed a few blog posts because I lost track of some, but I tried really hard to get back on my game and catch up afterwards. I think my greatest weakness in the assignment area though, is that I often do not do the assignments to the best of my abilities for I often do not read the assignments very clearly. This is something I really tried to work on when it came to this portfolio. I found it really important to read the assignment again and try to go back and see what I missed.

The second grading criterion was that we met the learning goals set at the beginning of our semester. In general you hoped that we would learn a fluency in different modes like bibliographies and letters, to use strategies for improving our critical thinking and writing, to show we understand the link between writing and critical thinking, how to evaluate and collect research for documenting, to identify personal strengths and weaknesses, and how to improve on them. In this class I faced writing styles that I had never heard of before like an annotated bibliography and a persuasive epistolary essay. From this class and your lessons I was able to understand the different parts of language and how to put them together to create different types

of writing. I think that I learned that I have a strength in MLA format, and that from that handy OWL website I can make sure I am always right. I learned that a bibliography is something I can do well, that I know what quotes are supportive and which aren't. As Gordon Harvey says I now know that I have great strengths in evidence and sources. I also learned a great deal about motive. Before this class I truly struggled with knowing how formal or informal to be in writing, and from what you taught us about motive I now know that I can find the balance. I know that when talking to the president of the school you should be more formal than when you are addressing your student body. This weakness became a strength. I never realized before this class how important revision is and how important it is to improve upon your writing and critical thinking skills. I found that this is a weakness that I had to face while creating a portfolio. I think that peer revision was extremely helpful and so was the William Zinsser article about simplicity. I think that being simple was my weakness. I would forget what I was writing about often and go off on a tangent without realizing how important it is to be simplistic and focused. I think that knowing the connection between critical thinking and writing is a big weakness of mine still. I have a lot of trouble with what Gordon Harvey says is analysis. Analysis has a lot to do with connecting the critical thinking to your writing in general. In your last class it all kind of clicked to me when we read Daniel Wilde and I realized that the wiring is your thought not your way of conveying it. Next on the goals was research. A strength of mine is research and knowing the difference between a good quote and a bad quote and good research and bad research. Your class made me realize that I do know what good evidence is. I believe that through your class I was able to really pick up on what I am good at and what I am not so good at from your very large array of different assignments.

Along with these specific goals, you wanted us to learn mastery with language. I think that I was able to achieve and fully understand each one as they were to have a fluency in elements of academic writing, writing as a process, rhetorical strategies, grammar and mechanics, and disciplinary conventions. Through the activities that we did in class I was able to understand these otherwise foreign terms. One time that I fully understood the elements of academic writing was when we had to do peer revision and I was able to pick up on when a writer used Gordon Harvey's elements like stitching, analysis and orienting. I also showed fluency as a process with this activity because I was able to edit and reedit my work while continuing to get second hand opinions. One instance that I developed fluency with rhetorical strategies was when we used comparison while writing our mock debate interviews because we compared how different people felt about truth in film. My weakness is still in grammar and mechanics; I have such a rough time with that. I think that your corrections on my papers made my realize some of the mistakes I commonly make. I think that through creating different disciplines with different audiences I was able to understand the conventions of each like a letter to the president of a film to the school as a whole.

The third and final grading criterion was our portfolio where we were to make careful revisions. My first step on creating my portfolio was to look at each paper and go back and read the assignments to make sure that I knew what I was actually supposed to be doing. The second step was to apply those changes, to remove all things that just were extra. The third thing was to use Zinsser's idea of simplicity and make sure that I proved a point and stayed focus without adding too much fluff. I also know that grammar is still a huge flaw and I needed to fix all the issues that came up when peers read over my work and so did you. I used my weaknesses like analysis and tried to make them my strengths.

For the revision process, I realized, it is not always about fixing grammar, or sentence structure, but more about fixing the overall thoughts and feeling of the writing piece. To focus more on what you are trying to say, and less on how you put it together grammatically. Daniel H. Wild, a writer and doctor we studied, said “The process of revision allows room for correcting sentence-level errors, but the emphasis in the development of critical thinking skills lies in the act of revision, of reseeded one’s written work, illuminated by assertions, commentary, and classroom debates” (23). Wild believed that the revision process was not necessarily about fixing grammar and spelling but more about the editing of your thoughts, for he felt that one’s writing is in fact their critical thinking process and not just their way of portraying them. He felt that by channeling claims, people’s thoughts, and discussions that one could truly revise their work, while revising my works I realized this is true. In the English 110 class, I wrote a persuasive epistolary essay to the president of Queens College to save a piece of artwork, a sculpture by Donna Dennis. Upon writing it I knew very little information about the piece. Now that I am editing my paper, I am using what Wild said about revision. Instead of just focusing on what I didn’t do right grammatically I am focusing on fixing my piece and adding what I have learned since, which has changed my whole thought process, and view on why to save the sculpture. This thought on revision was something that really helped me, when it came to fixing up my writing for this portfolio.

One last part of the class, that I found to be my favorite, was the films. I think I found a strength of mine in connecting writing with filmmaking. A huge part of the class was Dziga Vertov and the connection between a piece of paper and moving film. I think this class made me truly understand that film is actually just moving words. They both contain elements of an academic essay and our films were always just moving essays. This class showed me that

although I still have weaknesses in analysis and grammar that I really do have a creative mind and when I focus and simplify my work I can have good writing. This is a skill that will not only help me in future English classes but also my college career as a whole.

Sincerely,

Carlene Faith

Peer Interview Transcript and Reflection Essay

**Transcript**

Interviewer (Carlene Faith): Ok, we're going to start off with your name, age, and where you're from.

Interviewie (Mark Rivera): Alright my names uh Mark Rivera. I'm seventeen, just turned seventeen like two months ago and I'm Colombian, full Colombian but I live in Elmherst, New York.

Interviewer (Carlene Faith): Ok, and if you could describe yourself in one word what would it be, and why?

Interviewie (Mark Rivera): Ugh I'd probably say competetative cause I'm very competetive when it comes to sports or anything else. Not cocky, but competetive

Interviewer (Carlene Faith): Ok, if there was one moment in your life that you say would like change you completely and make you who you are, what would it be?

Interviewie (Mark Rivera): Ugh I'd probably, I it'd probably be meeting my my my stepdad because he walked into my life when I was like hmm five, six years old and he completely changed my life totally. He taught me everything, most of the stuff I know right now.

Interviewer (Carlene Faith): So you'd say he's probably your most influencial person in your life, right?

Interviewie (Mark Rivera): Yea, he deffinitly influenced a lot of sports, music, ugh gave me a lot of lessons that I needed to learn and yea that's about it.

Interviewer (Carlene Faith): Ok, and what is your favorite thing to do?

Interviewie (Mark Rivera): Definitly play sports, I play a I play a tons of sports

Interviewer (Carlene Faith): Like?

Interviewie (Mark Rivera): Ugh basketball, soccer, used to play volleyball, but ping pong is a sport, not a major sport but I was thrown into a couple of tournaments. Ugh never really got into baseball, American football I played for my school and yea

Interviewer (Carlene Faith): Okay

Interviewee (Mark Rivera): I guess those are my hobbies, a little bit of video games in between (laugh)

Interviewer (Carlene Faith): (laugh)

### **Reflection**

While looking back on my experience with the interview process I went through, with being interviewed and interviewing my classmate Mark Rivera, all I can think is it was a great experience. At first when I found out that we were being assigned partners I was scared because sometimes I can be shy when talking to people I don't know too well. Soon after, I realized that the best part of the assignment was actually that we were assigned partners. It brought me out of my comfort zone and into a new experience that I was worried I wouldn't be very good at. The experience gave me a chance to get to know someone I had never talked to before on a very personal level, as we were both very honest and open with each other in our answers.

My feelings while being interviewed were very mixed. At first I was very shy and scared about what Mark, my partner, would ask and what I would say back. I was worried I wouldn't know what to say or would be too closed off to be open about personal things. Although I have done many theatre productions with ease, without worrying about what people would think, this was much different. I worried what my classmates would think about me, because instead of acting like someone else I was afraid they'd see the real me and judge me. I realized though, that it was a lot easier and more enjoyable than I thought it would be. I found out that I could be open with someone new and that I wasn't shy at all. When it came to interviewing Mark, I was a lot less nervous. I thought for a while about my questions because my goal was to create an enjoyable original video, void of yes or no answers. I thought my questions turned out good

because I was able to get really interesting in depth answers out of Mark. I found out that he was easy to work with and really candid about a lot of personal things like his step father.

Overall, I found that this experience taught me a lot. Not just about filming, or writing good questions, or even about location and lighting but about not judging people and getting to know them. I got to know someone I wouldn't have necessarily got to know otherwise. I learned a lot about myself, my partner, and threw watching the videos, the whole class. I really enjoyed this process and could really see myself wanting to do something again like this. It makes me really look forward to the rest of this class, and the rest of the documentary projects.

Persuasive Epistolary Essay

Ms. Carlene Faith  
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President James L. Muyskens  
Queens College, City University of New York  
65-30 Kissena Boulevard  
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October 9, 2010

Dear President James L. Muyskens,

Upon arriving this year to Queens College as a freshman I was welcomed on campus by wonderful faculty, beautiful buildings, and all different interesting pieces of artwork. I think that a large part of the Queens College campus is made up of artwork, whether it is large sculptures, fascinating architecture, or just pictures or photographs up on the walls of the buildings.

Although I find most of the artwork intriguing, one piece stands out, a sculpture by Donna Dennis, a professor at SUNY Purchase, named "The Four Winds of the World." It killed me to find out that this figure might be destroyed. Knowing that the faculty might turn it into a moped parking lot or a vending machine completely filled me with dismay.

Finding this wonder on campus all started when one day I was on my way to my first class and I got lost. I ended up by this amazing sculpture I had never seen before. It stood out to me because it was the most beautiful different piece of artwork I had seen in a long time. When I found out that my English professor, Dr. Kevin L. Ferguson, was going to have us film an observational documentary film about a piece of artwork on campus I knew this is what I wanted to do it on. A ceramic tiled compass filled with teal blue, canary yellow, white and black tiles is the center piece of this captivating sculpture. Coming out of the middle of the compass are metal

rods shaped into swirls going in all different directions. Among the swirls are stain glass ovals with mythological characters from different cultures inside of them. The stain glass ovals colored lime green and pale yellow adorn ants, to represent the Japanese myth about ants creating the world. Surrounding the centerpiece is an open circle cut into parts that are completely made up of molded metal rods much like the centerpiece. Also like the centerpiece, there are scattered stainless glass ovals with birds, dragons, other animals, and other symbols resembling different cultures in colors like dark blue, light green, red and yellow. The sculpture is located in the heart of the walkway by Klapper Hall and the Dining Hall. It is located in a very busy part of the campus where a large number of students are also rushing through. It makes the walk from class to class way more interesting and beautiful. All of this compiles into one complete sculpture that brings such a light to the campus, which is why it simply cannot be turned into yet another useless emotionless parking lot or vending machine.

One reason that the artwork cannot be destroyed is that it brings happiness and emotion to the students. I know that this piece not only is special to me but to other students as well. In my class alone students were affected by the presence and beauty of this fanciful artwork. Standing in front of this piece to me, really just brings joy to my heart. It's such an uplifting bright piece. When the sun hits it through the stain glass panes there is such a light that comes out of it that you can't help but smile and be full of delight just from looking at it. Another student in my English class, Sinyee Cindy Leung, said "The feeling that this art piece gave me is that people dancing happily in front of the fountain and enjoying the water hits their skin. This is so lovely!" And another classmate of mine, Jenny Lu, said "I thought the piece looked magical, and I liked the concept of the spirals/ webs coming out from one point." These two students looked at pieces of glass, metal and tiles and felt emotions come out of it, and that is something

special that doesn't happen when you look at every piece of artwork. Although the faculty feels that this piece of land between the Dining Hall, Kiely Hall and Alumni Hall should be turned into a parking lot, the students don't. As it is, the campus has seventeen parking lots and having another lifeless concrete slab on campus might benefit commuters but overall would just bring down the moral of the students. No one's opinion in this case should matter more whether it is a faculty member or a student. This piece should not be destroyed especially since it brings magic and warmth to students, like this sculpture does. Taking it away would mean how the students feel just does not matter.

Another reason why I think that the piece should be saved is because Queens College is an institution filled with intellectually and visually stimulating things and this piece is a great example of that. At this school, for me, it's very important to be intellectual and keep your mind working, not necessarily in the classroom but just everywhere on campus. Walking around on should be intellectually stimulating and you should see things that make you think and open up your mind. This stunning piece of artwork is completely up to interpretation, it makes you think. My classmate saw it as children playing in the sun by the water and I see it as insects and people dancing. Dennis, the artist, saw it as a cultural fusion with wind in the four directions of the world, north, south, east and west. Everyone can look at this piece and see something different and looking at it raises some questions and keeps you thinking in a way a black concrete and barbed wire parking lot cannot. Its location also has to do with its intellectually stimulating appearance. The sculpture is right in the middle of everything, a very busy area on the campus. Everyone is walking back and forth and instead of just walking on another useless slab they are walking and sitting on a beautiful conversation starter that will spark their interest and make them think. Art is really important to our campus, it enlightens and inspires, kind of the same

way that Queens College itself does. This piece is particularly inspiring because it's full of luminosity and it makes people feel happy and optimistic and it enlightens you because it is not such a realistic view on something, it's questionable and inviting.

This piece is also very important and needs to stay because it brings the campus, the students, and the faculty together. The piece was created to embody the campus and its very diverse population. It represents all the nationalities, countries and cultures at Queens College. Walking around campus, it is very clear that Queens College is all about diversity, it's everywhere. You see students of different cultures hanging out together, walking to class together, and spending their time together. Dennis' sculpture brings that all together. It takes symbols from all over the world including Japan, India, Egypt and many other places and forms them together into a sculpture. The campus is more than just students and faculty but we are a family, and this piece represents that. If it was destroyed, a bit of all of us would be destroyed as well, for the piece represents all of us. It is a place that brings us together not only figuratively but literally too, with its benches that give everyone a place to hang out. A parking lot would not do this and would not be a symbol of our cultural fusion and celebration at Queens College.

As an 18 year old college student I have seen a lot of artwork over the years. Some pieces have inspired me, some bored me, and some even puzzled me. Nothing I have ever seen before made me feel like this though. I have always been interested in art being that my family is full of artists. Although I have felt emotion come out of paintings, sculptures and photographs I have never gotten so much of a feeling out of something like I did out of this fantasy sculpture that completely sucked me in and made me smile. This piece gives so much life to the campus and should stay as a permanent fixture. No one should push something that brings joy, is loved by the students, provokes thoughts, and brings all the cultures of Queens College together out of

the way for something we already have on campus. This piece is one of a kind and destroying would be like killing off the light of our campus. It would a poor decision to ruin it. I hope that this letter and my point of view on this stunning piece will make a difference when it comes to the decision of reconstruction. I hope that the right choice is made and that I get to continue to visit this piece everyday while I'm on campus to relive the blissful feelings I get when I am there, and that I can hopefully share this feeling with my fellow classmates and faculty. Thank you for listening to what I had to say.

Yours Sincerely,

Carlene Faith  
Queens College Freshman  
English 110 Class

## Roland Barthes Reading Response

When I first printed out the reading *The Romans in Films* by Roland Barthes, a French literary theorist, philosopher and critic, I was intrigued because Roman films are usually quite interesting. I was hoping the reading would be the same. After reading Barthes point of view on the films I was pleased since his view on stereotypes is not only interesting but in many cases quite true, for people believe stereotypes all of the time. After reading I thought about Barthes' view on ethics, which are moral principles and the rules of conduct that people rule their life and what they do by.

Barthes placed a lot of focus in this reading on the way directors portray people based on the way they are quote on quote supposed to act. He used the film *Julius Caesar* directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz starring Marlon Brando as an example of stereotypical ethics. From reading this essay I realized Barthes believed that a lot of symbol stereotypes portrayed in films are false to the actual subject, in this case actual Romans. He started out by discussing the way directors use the sign of a man with a combed curl above his forehead as a Roman. This is a stereotype that is recognized around the world that falsely represents what a Roman is, "What then is associated with these insistent fringes? Quite simply the label of Roman-ness." (Barthes 26). He also uses many other examples including the way Roman's foreheads are as Barthes says "...one of those Roman foreheads, whose smallness has at all times indicated a specific mixture of self righteousness, virtue and conquest" (26). He uses examples of disorderly locks of hair and disorder to represent the former and a plait which is around someone's neck and asymmetry to represent a latter.

One huge example that Barthes uses to represent the Roman's ethics is their sweating. Directors use Vaseline to depict the sweat on the actors. In *Julius Caesar* the director uses it on the men in order to show that they are constantly thinking. It is a sign of their torment and self torture of the tragedy they are soon to commit. Overall Barthes makes a good point of ethics that often they are misconstrued due to wrong stereotypes. False stereotypes in Roman films often throw you off of what the real Roman ethics were. They were not necessarily about the perfectly placed hair, or the perfect size forehead or even the fake sweat. These are all stereotypes in which directors like Mankiewicz put into our head that make us believe this is what real Romans were like and were supposed to act like. I very much agree that cinematography sometimes gets in the way of our idea of someone's or a group's ethics.

## Annotated Bibliography

## Works Cited

Adler, Daniella. "Sitting Pretty." The Knight News [Queens, New York] 31 Aug. 2008: 1-2. Print.

Adler's article describes the piece of artwork, "The Four Winds of the World" by Donna Dennis by unfolding the visual components of it and explaining the true meaning of its many different complex parts. The art which is on the Queens College campus "located in the center of the plaza, tying the grassy area in front of the dining hall to the paved pathway... functions as both an inviting bench area and as a symbol of the crossroads that bring the Queens College community together" (1). The article also goes further to discuss the importance of it on the Queens College campus as a "visual connector". Adler explains the piece's interesting visual aspects and how Dennis "incorporates mythology from societies around the world, past and present, appropriate for Queens College's diverse student body" (1) and how the sculpture lends "a visual interest to the area" (2). In order to really explain Dennis' piece of art, Adler adds examples of things that represent what Dennis meant by "the four winds of the world" or the "cardinal directions that encompass the world" (1). Adler explains how the "colored glass jewels" of icons of different cultures from around the world that lie beside each other symbolize "Queens College('s)... multinational demographic" (1). Adler makes clear the idea that the sculpture shows "... the emergence of the winds from the center of the Earth" (1), and "... the central part of the cosmos" (1). This article would be very useful in my final paper, because it gives me a lot of information on the sculpture, its meaning and why it was created, which was to connect "the dining hall to the rest of the campus" (1) as part of the "New York City-funded Percent for Art Program" (1). I hope to fully represent my argument that this piece of artwork is a huge symbol with great importance on the campus and this article gives a lot of evidence that my argument is true. Also it makes me think, is this artwork as Adler and I believe a true important "symbol" for the Queens College Campus? Or just merely in reality an eyesore that people rush past between classes?

Dennis, Donna. Personal Interview. 1 Nov. 2010.

The personal interview I conducted with Donna Dennis, the artist of “The Four Winds of the World” which is the artwork I am studying, summarized the thoughts that Dennis had about her artwork, why she decided to create it and why she picked Queens College for its location. Dennis explained that she got the opportunity to create the artwork through a “competition (that) was run to find and choose two artists to create artwork for (Klapper Hall)” (Dennis) which is a building on the Queens College campus. “Because of the international nature of the student body and because the site was circular, I decided to work with the idea of the four winds or four directions that are mythologized in every culture throughout the world” (Dennis). This, Dennis explained, was what went through her head while designing the structure of the sculpture. She explained that she had a “proposal” to change the plain circular area into “seat backs” or benches and have a structure in the middle of the circle that has what she explained to be a “faux fountain” look. She also explained how the “glass jewels” were cut out welded steel with glass insets with mythological themes from around the world. Finally Dennis explained her experience and how she started off by researching “imagery that was related to each of the directions from many cultures” (Dennis) and that “since it was the creation of the world (she) was depicting... (she) had the winds emerge from the center” (Dennis). This interview would be useful in my final paper, because getting the artists account of what happened and why she made this piece is crucial to understanding the sculpture as a whole. It is very important to get a good account of the ideas behind the work, what materials she used and what opportunity lead her to this display.

Detmers, William R. and Kenneth Marantz. “ The Liberal Education Component of Art Teacher Education: A Response.” Visual Arts Research 14.1 (1988): 32-40. JSTOR. Web. 29 Oct. 2010.

Everett, Deborah. “Donna Dennis: Home Away from Home.” Sculpture 25.5 (2006): 44-49. JSTOR. Web. 29 Oct. 2010.

Everett’s article summarizes Donna Dennis’s art display “Tourist Cabins,” the sheer impact it had on the art scene, Dennis’s early artwork and her career as a whole for she was, as Everett said, an

artist who “pushed sculpture toward the domain of architecture” (45). Everett begins by explaining a little bit of information about Dennis and her educational history which all began with a BFA from Carleton College in 1964. Everett also gives the reader a big glimpse at the early ideas that inspired Dennis. The article goes on to explain a lot of the larger displays that Dennis has had including the different parts of the “Tourist Cabin” collection, which is a collection of miniature models of cabins. The article shows a lot of the collections that inspired Dennis, like Walker Evan’s roadside photographs and Joseph Cornell’s boxes. Everett explains how Dennis was attracted to the “symbolism and physicality of doorways” (45) which gave off this feel that Dennis explained as “being elsewhere”. Everett explains that the origin of the “Tourist Cabin” series of sculptures “lies in her childhood memories of family vacations and the small houses that were rented out to tourists as more Americans took the road” (45). Everett’s article includes a quote from Dennis’s journal that explained how “she is interested in ‘a home that is not a home. A home on a journey. A home, a shelter, but without warmth or comfort or security. A “place to stay” just for one night before moving on and on, never staying long anywhere, never belonging anywhere’” (46), which is a quote that really gets into the psyche of Dennis and explains her work a little. Everett also goes on to argue that “Dennis’s vernacular architecture reveals the isolationism behind our individualism, posing timely questions about our capacity for social contracts, while offering a challenge to the courage of our convictions” (49). This article would be useful in my final paper, because when studying a piece of artwork as abstract as this one, it is very important to understand not only the piece but the artist, who in this case is quite complex as Everett explains in this article. Also the article is good because it includes many photographs of other pieces by Donna Dennis, like “Connecting” (49), “Tourist Cabin (Pensacola)” (46), “Moccasin Creek Cabins” (46), and “Deep Station” (45), which gives me a greater example of her work besides the single piece I am studying. In order to get a true feel of what the artist was thinking when she made the piece it is a good idea to understand her as

a person threw her thoughts, her artwork, her past, her inspirations and her life and this article makes that possible.

O'Thearling, Sibyl and Dr. Cynthia Ann Buckley-Green. "Art Education and At-Risk Youth: Enabling Factors of Visual Expression." *Visual Arts Research* 22.1 (1996): 20-25.[JSTOR](#). Web. 29 Oct. 2010.

Mock Debate-Interview Transcript

Transcript of: The Carlene Faith Show for November 2<sup>nd</sup>

Carlene Faith: Good Morning, and thank you for tuning into The Carlene Faith Show, where we discuss everything art. Today our topic is “Does Film Tell the Truth? Are the images we see on the big screen reality? Also we will be taking a close look at the role and responsibility that film and other art has in the community. Today’s guests are: artist and SUNY Purchase art professor, Donna Dennis, and film critic and author of “Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art”, Béla Balázs. So without further ado let’s bring out our distinguished guests Donna and Béla.

Donna Dennis: Good Morning, thank you for having me here.

Béla Balázs: Good Morning.

Carlene Faith: Hello, thank you both for coming. I wanted to start off by discussing the role of truth in film. Being a fan of your book, Béla Balázs I am very aware of how you feel about the role of truth in film. I was just wondering if you could explain to my audience how you feel on this subject.

Béla Balázs: Well Carlene, I think that “what we see on the screen is a photograph; that is, it was not created on the screen as a painting is created on the canvas but was already previously existent and visible in reality” (Balázs 46). So since it is enacted in front of the camera, there is some truth to it. The characters and the story line might be fictional but there is a truth that lies in film and filming

Carlene Faith: What is it that you mean by truth Béla?

Béla Balázs: I mean that it is something that at some point in time was real, for it was in front of the camera and represents some sort of truth.

Carlene Faith: But wouldn't you say that since there is a lot of editing going on behind the scenes that all truth kind of goes out the window?

Béla Balázs: I suppose, but the audience isn't seeing what's going on in the editing room or anything like that, they are seeing what the final production is, which fine is a little bit of reconstruction, but still there is some truth or reality to the film. Even though the camera takes a lot of creative liberties there is a truth to what they are showing and conveying.

Carlene Faith: Well Donna, I know you are an artist and film is much like art. What's your opinion on this matter?

Donna Dennis: I think that the truth lies within the artist or the director or writer. It's a recreation of that truth. The film in my opinion is an abstract sometimes biased look at the truth, whether or not it is acted out in front of the camera.

Béla Balázs: Biased or not, there is a truth to it. The camera allows the audience to enter a new world and the distance between the audience and that world is erased. The director or the writer or the creator brings the spectator into a new original truth. They see what happened at one point in front of the camera that was the original truth to the film.

Carlene Faith: I can see that you both have very different opinions on this matter; I think you both have great points and look at it from different perspectives. Donna, you are an artist and you know very well the process of conveying truth in your art, while Béla you're a film critic and your job is to critique all of this. Maybe if we discuss art and its importance in general we can find something we can all agree on. Donna, I know that your artwork is displayed all over the country including the CUNY Queens College campus. How do you feel about the influence of it and other arts on the campus and in the community?

Donna Dennis: Well Carlene, I feel like art captures something, whether it is a moment, an emotion, or a place. Art truly has great meaning or importance to a campus or a community. I think that art and film can have negative and positive effects on people and communities alike. A lot of my work is meant to convey an emotion and bring light to a community. It's very important to have art displayed and influence young people in a community in a positive way. I wanted my art work to be positive in the way that it represents, in this case, the multicultural aspects of the Queens College campus.

Carlene Faith: Agreed, what do you think Béla?

Béla Balázs: I think that there is a huge impact on community in films. I think that the viewer plays a large role in the picture. Film, in my opinion is the first bourgeois art form, meaning, it was made for the middle class. Since film continues to be that way it is able to influence and take a larger role in the community.

Carlene Faith: That's interesting that you brought that up Béla, I wanted to discuss the true role of art and film in communities.

Donna Dennis: Well if I could say the role of art in one word I would say inspire. I think that seeing a piece of art could be truly inspiring to someone. I am a professor at SUNY Purchase and I want to inspire students. I think that art is meant to make you feel something and that in a community it can display all different emotions including hope, happiness, joy, and possibly even sadness.

Béla Balázs: Well for me, I think that film's main role in a society or a community is to convey, as Donna said, an emotion or a new world. To bring light to something new in a totally different perspective where you enter a new reality and feel what the character feels and live in their life even for just a moment.

Carlene Faith: Interesting points, but what about the responsibility of film and art to the community? Not always is the community enlightened or inspired by art but sometimes art can have a negative effect. Art has quite a responsibility in that.

Béla Balázs: I think that goes back to what I was saying about truth. I think that sometimes bringing an audience into a new world of excitement through feeling and seeing what's going on in the movie might have a negative effect. Like show how to commit a crime or make a bad impression on a young audience through violence or domestic abuse. The audience does have to realize although there is a truth to what goes on there are actors in the film and often the whole story and script is completely fictional.

Donna Dennis: Agreed, I think that there is often negative attributes of film but in my opinion art displays are very positive for the most part. I think that art and films responsibility is never truly to have a negative effect on a community.

Carlene Faith: I think we're almost out of time. Thank you both for taking time out of your busy schedule to come to my show this morning.

Béla Balázs: It was my delight, thanks for having us.

Carlene Faith: Thank you both very much for your very honest and interesting answers. It has been my pleasure to have you on my show this morning. Tune in tomorrow for our discussion on film form and the importance of it. We will have writer Sergei Eisenstein and Roy Levin here as our guests so make sure not to miss it! Thank you again and have an amazing day!

Work Cited

Balázs, Béla. Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art. Trans. Edith Bone. New York: Dover Publications INC., 1970. Print.

Kino-Pravda Script

1. (c.u) black screen with “Kino Pravda”...Carlene Faith in lime green on it
2. (m.s) trees with light pole and Queens College logo
3. (c.u) Queens College logo with white background
4. (l.s) full view of the Queens College map
5. (l.s) fade into students sitting outside the cafeteria
6. (l.s) fade into students sitting around a table talking inside
7. (m.s) fade into students walking past artwork
8. (l.s) fade into students walking past artwork
9. (c.u) black screen with “The Four...(1994) in lime green on it
10. (l.s) fade into far away shot of artwork
11. (m.s) fade into medium shot of artwork
12. (m.c.u) fade into medium close up of artwork
13. (c.u) fade into close up shot of the centerpiece of the artwork
14. (moving m.s) shot of me in front of the artwork introducing why it is important to the campus
15. (moving l.s to c.u) clip from observational documentary zooming into the artwork
16. (moving m.s) shot of me in front of artwork explaining what its made of, why its there and what it is
17. (c.u) shot of steel scrap metal
18. (c.u) shot of plus sign
19. (c.u) shot of broken glass
20. (c.u) shot of equal sign
21. (c.u) shot of artwork
22. (c.u) black screen with white writing about how amazing the transformation was

23. (c.u) fade into black screen with white writing typing “Donna Dennis”
24. (m.s) fade into picture of Donna Dennis, the artist
25. (c.u) shot of Donna Dennis quote about her artwork and its inspiration
26. (c.u) fade into black screen with white writing typing “how the students feel...”
27. (c.u) fade into black screen with white writing typing “Stefani Berlingerio (Graduate Student)”
28. (moving m.s) fade into video of Stefani’s opinion of the artwork, from community interview
29. (c.u) drop down shot of black screen with white writing with quote from Sinyee Cindy Leung
30. (c.u) fade into black screen with white writing typing “Joseph Antwan (Senior)”
31. (moving m.s) fade into video of Joseph’s opinion of the artwork, from community interview
32. (c.u) drop down shot of black screen with white writing with quote from Jenny Lu
33. (c.u) fade into black screen with white writing typing “Thomas Jordan (visitor)”
34. (moving m.s) fade into video of Thomas’s opinion of the artwork, from community interview
35. (moving l.s) shot of me in front of outer rim of artwork making a conclusion about the importance of the artwork
36. (moving c.u) black screen with lime green writing of credits rolling “Thank You for watching...Queens College”

## Film Festival Program Notes

Through walking in someone else's shoes and flashy cuts the audience gets a good look into the art scene on the CUNY Queens College campus in director Brad Bujan's film Kino Pravda. The film which takes place on the inspiring Queens College campus focuses around the importance of art on college grounds for intellectual stimulation that goes beyond what just the teachers teach their students in the classroom. Bujan presents this thought eloquently through subtitles and keeping his focus on a single piece of art on the campus. The star of the film is none other than Rene Paul Chamberllan's chiseled powerful sculpture "Prometheus" and Bujan himself as the voice over.

The film starts off with a shot of Bujan's feet to symbolize that the audience is taking a walk in his footsteps around the Queens College campus. The film then goes on to show snippets of shots of campus artwork, including Donna Dennis' "The Four Winds of the World" and Vito Acconci's "The Sphere's of Klapper Hall". The central idea behind Kino Pravda is to prove the importance of art in general and the sculpture "Prometheus" on the Queens College campus. Bujan proves this with a very cut and paste sort of feel, with pieces of film and still pictures coming together. He explains the history of the building in which the sculpture is on, the history of the artist, and the history and legend of the Greek god of fire, Prometheus. Through this beautiful piece of carved limestone Bujan illustrates the "beautiful and inspiring" nature of the Queens College campus.

Queens College was founded in 1937 and is a part of the CUNY public university system. Its school motto is "Discimus ut Serviamus: We learn so that we may serve". In 1949, the science building was named "Ira Remsen Hall" after Ira Remsen. Remsen was a New Yorker, a doctor, a chemist, and the president of John Hopkins Universty. He also accidentally discovered

artificial sweetening. All of this is documented in Bujan's film where he focuses on the building's entrance which has the sculpture above it. The camera takes you to the front of the building where above lies the huge sculpture carved into the entrance. The artist and collaborator of "Prometheus" was Rene Paul Chamberllan. Chamberllan was a master of French Modern style and created over thirty sculptures. Bujan pays great tribute to Chamberllan by calling him a "forerunner" and showcasing his sculpture as a very important part of Queens College.

The sculpture, which Bujan focuses on in Kino Pravda is of Prometheus the Greek god of fire. Prometheus is known to be the creator of mankind and the father of science and life. So his sculpture is defiantly perfect to adorn the science building at the college. Although the piece is a stunning example of intellectual artwork, Bujan does add some not so persuasive information to back up his idea about the importance of artwork on the campus. Bujan places a great deal of importance on the story of Prometheus and the consequences of his ever so horrible choices. These decisions ultimately led to the gruesome sentence of having his liver eaten out every day since it regenerated each night. This was done by fellow Greek god Zeus. This information although interesting, did not exactly support Bujan's claim of the positive affect of artwork.

This film which is coincidently called Kino Pravda is a Kino Pravda film, in the style of legendary film writer and director Dziga Vertov. The film is directed by Bujan in true Vertovian style. Bujan brings a very Vertovian feel to his audience as he brings Vertov's elements to life. As many are unaware of what a Kino Pravda is, put simply it is a "film truth". Kino Pravda's contain clearly stated true but arguable arguments, analyze evidence to support their claim, are presented in a logical order and have a clear motive. Another thing that is extremely important about Kino Pravda films is that they are intellectually stimulating and captivating and should make people think. This should be done without over editing and added extras like explosions for

just sheer visual stimulation. All of this should be done, without losing the main point of the film, which in Bujan's film was the importance of art on the Queens College campus, as intellectual stimulation. Bujan does a good job of keeping the balance between visual and intellectual stimulation while at the same time keeping focused. The film is a good example of a Kino Pravda even though the intro is a little too flashy and over edited.

Brad Bujan, is a fairly new young director. He is a freshman in college and currently attending Queens College. It's been three months since Bujan's directorial debut with the interview film Interview with Nash which showcased Nash, a fellow classmate of Bujan. The film was made in early September. After he explored the interview genre, Bujan experimented with documentary. Bujan's second film, Observational Doc., debuted in late October of this year. The film began Bujan's focus on artwork and the "Prometheus" sculpture. The film was a silent film which for three minutes just showcased Rene Paul Chamberllan's sculpture up close and personal. Bujan then continued to work with this piece when he created this film, Kino Pravda, about a week ago. The film had critics from the English 110 class roaring. Beatrice Pana exclaimed that she "think(s) this information helped provide evidence for (the) point and make (the) argument all the more persuasive. I also loved your intro". Kevin Prunty, another critic, said "I liked the whole introduction of the video. I think it was really creative to make all of the campus be seen to show the amount of art on campus. You also did have a lot of information and you presented it in a really interesting way. You didn't just put text up on the screen; you had pictures to go along with what you were talking about. I really enjoyed it". Although quite young and inexperienced, Bujan is bound to make a splash with his creative viewpoint and flashy style in the art film world. His charming films are currently showcased on the Reading Film blog from English 110 and on YouTube.

This film is information packed and full of not only intellectual stimulation but also a very visually stimulating approach. Bujan highlights the importance of artwork on the Queens College as intellectual stimulation that goes far beyond just what is presented as a lesson in a classroom. He brings this idea to life while comparing this idea to Rene Paul Chamberllan's sculpture "Prometheus" in this captivating film Kino Pravda. He proved to the audience something that was arguable that he analyzed and backed up quite well. Although Bujan did not always stay true to Dziga Vertov's idea of a Kino Pravda or "film truth", he captivates his audience and makes them think about this Greek god and his story. The film is flashy and choppy but yet is joined together to make a truth. This Kino Pravda style movie is sure to convince the audience that art is very important to a campus like Queens College, and should forever be preserved.