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**Living on the Border: A Participatory Film Discussing the Implications of
Limitless
Global Trade on the Health of Local Communities**

by
Michael Bernard

A Production Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through Communication and Social Justice
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2005

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Abstract

This documentary is an exploration of the destructive impact of corporate globalization as witnessed in the heart of the North American continent; it focuses on the Windsor and Sarnia regions, on the Canadian side of the border. The cities have very similar border related issues where ageing and highly polluting industrial infrastructure and endless commercial border crossings are the most invasive and noticeable concerns plaguing the community.

Living on the border, we see the dichotomy of freedom afforded to goods and trade in contrast to the heavily polluted environment which has virtually imprisoned the people in these communities. Free-market trade pacts have opened the borders for trade and commerce without accounting for the negative impact on the environment or the health and well being of community members. This film explores the links as contradictions between the limitless commercial trade crossing the border, the industries which create the consumer goods and how these are linked to the overall health of the community.

Dedications

This production thesis is dedicated to the workers in Chemical Valley, Sarnia, and Windsor Ontario who put their bodies on the line by working to produce the goods that we consume on a daily basis without thinking about their sacrifices. To chemical worker Blayne Kinart, who I never had the fortune of meeting as he passed away before the making of this film as a result of industrial cancer and to his wife Sandy Kinart, a strong woman who is not afraid to voice her outrage at the corporations which take our workers for granted.

Also to my life partner, Melissa Hennin, who has been by my side at all stages of my life--from T-ball to this production thesis. To my family and friends for their unwavering support. Also to my Aunt Leslie who has helped financially and mentally support me along the way. Especially to my father who works in chemical valley to support our family and to my mother who works in our local hospital to take care of our community, as well as our family...love and thanks for everything!

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To all those who contributed to the film, James Laxer, A Silver Mt. Zion, the Riderless, Bloemfontaine, Richard Workman, Melissa Hennin, Richard Harding, the Aamjiwnaang community, Jeremy Drummond, Council of Canadians, Department of Communications, and my classmates. Special thanks to Jim Brophy and Margaret Keith, at the Occupational Health Clinic, who pointed me in the right direction numerous times and who sat and discussed the film and our communities at length. Also to my advisors Alan Sears and Valerie Scatamburlo-D'annibale whose advice and guidance I greatly appreciate and to my thesis supervisor Sanjay Talreja--I could not ask for a wiser mentor.

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Introduction: Production Notes and Overview

Length: 20 minutes (**Note:** the proposed length was to be twenty three minutes, which was a projected running time arbitrarily picked by myself. The final duration of the film is a result of the material edited organically and arriving at this final duration of twenty minutes.)

Format: Filmed on DV; delivered on DVD

Dates of production: Began shooting: October 15, 2004,

Ended shooting: May of 2005.

Edited from February to May.

Screenings in mid-May, supplemented by a twenty page paper.

Background of the film : The malignant ageing industrial infrastructure that lines the shores from Sarnia through to Windsor is inherited from the region's role as port and industrial center for trade. This inheritance has not come without consequence, as this heavily industrialized corridor has the highest rates of cancer in the country-- as working and living conditions worsen in proportion to the chemical leaks and spills that frequently contaminate the air, soil and water.¹ In the past year there were, as CBC reported, "a string of incidents in which toxic substances have leaked into the air and drinking water of the people who live in the area dubbed "chemical valley."²

The Windsor/Detroit region is the center of trade between the United States and Canada. As author and professor James Laxer, a featured interviewee who recently published an extensive study on the border, notes, "if there is one piece of infrastructure

¹ This past year there were three chemical spills in six months.
Harris, Kate. (02/22/04) *Wallaceburg sick of its poisoned water: Residents fed up after 3 chemical spills in six months.* Ontario Star:Greatlakesdirectory.org

² *Water intakes shutoff for 6 Ontario communities after toxic spill.*
(February 2nd, 2004). CBC News: cbc.ca/news.

on which the economic link between the two countries rests most heavily, it is the Ambassador Bridge. The governments of both Canada and the United States recognize that a terrorist attack on the bridge would do more damage to a vital industry and to trade between the two countries than any other single event” (Laxer, 2004, p. 304). Whether or not a terrorist attack on Windsor or Sarnia is imminent or likely is highly debatable, but what should be stressed is that the infrastructure that our communities have grown dependent on is incredibly vital to the functioning of trade between both of our countries.

The alienation of one community, Sarnia, was countered by connecting regionally with another community, Windsor, which was facing similar problems. When Windsor and Detroit roads and bridges are blocked up, trade is often re-routed to Sarnia and Port Huron. Tens of thousands of transport trucks pass through these communities daily on “superhighways”, spewing their toxic fumes and tearing these cities apart, all for the trade of commodities³. The parallels between these community’s problems are visually identical, images of the endless streams of transport trucks lended well to visually representing the endless cycle of trade and consumption overrunning these small cities. Considering the close proximity and the interconnectedness of the industries in both communities, in addition to the high rates of disease, it was important to link the two communities and show how problems facing one town are essentially the same as problems facing other similar communities. Intentions are to unite those struggling to voice their concerns regionally, but it is also necessary to connect these seemingly local and regional concerns by showing how they are intimately related to global concerns facing much of the world: local sovereignty, quality of environment and working conditions.

³ Commodities include the buying and selling of waste, for example, the metropolis of Toronto sells much of its waste to communities in Michigan.

Jim Brophy and Margaret Keith run the Occupational Health Clinic that brought to light a *Globe and Mail* expose featuring Sarnia, the bolded title read: “People are afflicted with rare cancers at a rate nearly 35 per cent higher than the provincial average. It may be the worst outbreak of industrial disease in recent Canadian history.”⁴ Over the past year, I have met with the couple on a number of occasions to discuss how acceleration of trade and industry simultaneously accelerates the destruction of the natural environment--us included. It is my belief that these issues must be re-presented and reconnected to this area’s central role as the industrial gateway. Brophy and Keith were both enthusiastic about contributing to the film, and their work in participatory body mapping of industrial disease provided a wealth of knowledge concerning our communities’ poor health.

Working with Brophy and Keith, I was invited to attend an environmental meeting at the Aamjiwnaang reserve in Sarnia. Although this first meeting was not a filming opportunity and the content of the meeting was not intended for public release, this experience was definitely the most eye opening to the concerns of the community most acutely affected by the industries in Sarnia. The Aamjiwnaang reserve is located in the center of Chemical Valley and their exposure to these industrial plants has not come without consequence. Later on, I worked alongside a couple of their community members as well as Brophy and Keith while they documented the surveys they had conducted in their communities. Transferring the surveys to body maps provided the visuals portraying a community dealing with industrial health concerns.

The interview with Brophy in the *Globe and Mail* also led me to meet with Sandy Kinart, widow of worker Blayne Kinart, who was featured in the news article. Sandy

⁴ Mittelstaedt, Martin. *Dying for a Living*..(Saturday, March 13, 2004).
Globe and Mail, pp. F1, F4-F5.

lives in Sarnia and in addition to working at a local health center is also working to publish her experience with the health care system and coping with disease in the family. Her ability to move on and contribute to a more just workplace is a story vital to the documentary, but more importantly, to the overall sustainability of our community.

I filmed a conference organized by the Council of Canadians, which largely discussed Canada's direction towards integration with the United States. Discussions focused on tighter border security, the Missile Defence Plan and Canada's dependence on trade with the U.S.. The conference was very interactive as Council of Canadian Commissioners listened to local workers and environmental groups presenting their first hand accounts of living on the border. I was fortunate to film Richard Harding, a Canadian Auto Worker passionately concerned with the growing economic trends of opening the border to increase trade and how that is adversely degrading the health of the region and his own family.

These voices are often marginalized or overshadowed, in the mainstream press by "expert opinion", politicians or corporate press releases. By providing space and the communication tools necessary, these voices can be united and heard by others facing similar industrial problems. When the people of these communities have an adequate forum to have extended dialogues about these issues, change can begin to take place.

Theoretical Reflection

Paulo Freire asserts that the “fundamental theme of our epoch” may very well be “that of domination” (Freire, p. 103). Prominent scholars such as Freire and Noam Chomsky, to name only a few, have meticulously argued that domination is largely maintained by the corporate media.⁵ The major news agencies are hierarchically organized and rarely work on an intimate level with citizens to co-construct the news; this creates an exclusive society and topdown model of history.

In opposition to this are people working towards a democratic and participatory society with public control over communications; they work to collectively create history and, in turn, a more democratic society. Participatory use of media is polarized from corporate media and we can likely assume that the corporate media will never attempt to implement an open and accountable democratic media system. Participatory media must come from the public and this is increasingly becoming feasible, as high quality technology is becoming accessible enough for communities to share and network these privileges with those who have little or no access to forums or means to voice their stories.

This reflection will explore the praxis of participatory models and how they can be implemented with media. As well, participatory works that have influenced me will contextualize the theoretical influences. I will also make an argument for artistic films that avoid narrow, focalized topics and perspectives; for art which makes linkages to both global and local problems, promoting community and global solidarity. Maintaining democratic dialogue involves openness to the myriad of ideas and points of view--even in our small worlds--not reducing our stories to just one perspective. The voices in this documentary are traditionally marginalized in the mainstream media; this film is intended to be a most needed space for these voices, as ignoring the marginalized in the media

⁵ See Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent, or Force and Opinion*.

culminates in ignoring the marginalized in society.

Throughout the reflection, I will refer to my own work and experiences in my community. Exploring the works of others and applying theoretical foundations to my own work in participatory film making will allow me to understand my own community as well as my own craft and voice, enabling me to make more informed contributions to my world.

Democratic media are severely lacking in our working class communities. The mainstream press and political interests in this region work to cover-up and sedate the local population with corporate public relations press releases or shallow disconnected news stories. Noam Chomsky helped expose this trend through his Propaganda Model,

Another striking application of the propaganda model can be seen in the media's treatment of the chemical industry and its regulation. Because of the industry's power, as well as the media's receptivity to the demands of the business community, the media have normalized a system described by Rachel Carson in *Silent Spring* as "deliberately poisoning us, then policing the results." (Chomsky, 1998, 2002, p. xivii)

When Canada's national newspaper, *the Globe and Mail*, actually reported on some of the problems facing the community in an in-depth expose on occupational disease in Sarnia there was a "huge backlash" against the individuals who dared to participate in the story. Sandy Kinart, widow of deceased chemical worker, Blayne Kinart (the cancer stricken individual in the expose), in an interview said that the mayor and labour were quite upset with Blayne for putting his story "out there". One of the statements against the article was that it was really going to "hurt tourism in the area". Sandy goes on to say that when you see your neighbour getting sick and the guy who works next to you getting cancer it is hard not to say something. Sandy acknowledged that these issues are all political and that workers are connected to the products they sell, but she asks, "ultimately at the cost of your life...no." Despite how the mayor, industry or the press try to police public

opinion, these voices have a right to exist and to be in the public dialogue. There can be no moving towards positive change when we cannot even talk about the problem. There must be public space, forums and media that are accepting of all voices; a space which is severely limited and often dissuaded by the “backlash” of invested and powerful commercial/political interests which normalize the status quo, resulting in the deliberate poisoning of our communities.

Paulo Freire's seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, outlines the imperative need for democratic communications: “[W]omen and men [are] beings who cannot be truly human apart from communication, for they are essentially communicative creatures. To impede communication is to reduce men to the status of “things”-and this is a job for oppressors, not for revolutionaries” (Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 128). When the mainstream press does not permit community dialogue, but instead acts as a public relations manager, there is a fundamental crisis in social democracy.

What I draw most from in Freire's work and what can be related most to the film making process are his generative models for a liberating education where unconstrained dialogue between people within a community is essential. Communications “will be most educational when it is most critical, and most critical when it avoids the narrow outlines of partial or ‘focalized’ views of reality, and sticks to the comprehension of *total* reality” (Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 108). As discussed earlier, so much of the news media are guilty of reductionism, the refusal to see any systemic or larger picture. This degenerative model alienates the problems and the people of our communities.

Concerning media aesthetics, what must be considered is how to avoid producing work that is able to connect various ideas and levels of thought without seeming shallow or disconnected. Freire poses this problem,

“An equally fundamental requirement for the preparation of the

codifications is that their thematic nucleus be neither overly explicit nor overly enigmatic. The former may degenerate into mere propaganda, with no real decoding to be done beyond stating the obviously predetermined content. The latter runs the risk of appearing to be a puzzle or a guessing game. Since they represent existential situations, the codifications should be simple in their complexity and offer various decoding possibilities in order to avoid the brain-washing tendencies of propaganda. Codifications are not slogans; they are cognizable objects, challenges towards which the critical reflection of the decoders should be directed.” (Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 114)

The problem with working with film is the apparent need for narrative structure and concision-- the audience supposedly needs a straight story without confusion. Yet, focusing on one specific topic without contextualizing the problem is much too simplistic and leads to a narrow view. Freire outlines how generative topics can move in “concentric circles” which “contain the possibility of unfolding into again many themes, which in turn call for new tasks to be fulfilled.” “Themes of a universal character” can be linked to smaller “limit situations” (Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 102-103). General, international “broad epochal units”, such as capitalism and global trade pacts, i.e. NAFTA, FTAA, can easily be linked to the particular themes plaguing the local community, such as the tens of thousands of trucks that pass through the community and “belch deadly fumes” or the degraded factory conditions causing high rates of cancer among the region’s workers.

Talking with local citizens revealed that although not everyone is familiar with texts like NAFTA, they realize that the industrial problems in the local communities are linked to global trade and that these systems cannot be sustained indefinitely. Our communications must provide space to move dialogue in such a manner as to avoid narrowing and focalizing these views, the trend which tends to dominate in our media today.

Freire revisits this idea in his later work, *Teachers as Cultural Workers*, giving the

critical exercise of “moving from *sensory experience*, which characterizes the day-to-day, to *generalization*” (Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers*, p. 19). In reference to applying this exercise with a working class community in Porto Mont by comparing in to cities with similar problems, he says that “*Immersed* in the reality of their small world, they were unable to *see* it. By taking some distance, they *emerged* and were thus able to see it as they never had before.” Citizens of Sarnia who may never have travelled the short distance to Windsor may not realize the similarities between their communities. Although the cities’ petrochemical and auto industries are intimately integrated and interdependent linked by rail, waterway and road, workers will likely never meet and relate their experiences. By re-presenting these two communities to each other it is easy to see their relation to each other and see how similar their environmental, health and workplace problems are. Citizens participating in the communication form a dialogue between the two cities and they also unite their voices.

The collaborative effort between workers, researchers, educators, facilitators and even artists co-creates holistic communication . Researchers/facilitators Margaret Keith and Jim Brophy state that “the participatory nature of mapping is arguably its greatest strength” because “mapping involves the direct input of those who are most intimately familiar with their workplace and its functions.” Workers coming out to physically map their diseases in collaboration with other workers “resulted in a disturbing snapshot of the collective ill health of the workers” (Brophy, Keith p. 149). Brophy and Keith point out that “when created collectively hazard mapping has an intrinsic validity check” (Brophy, Keith, p. 147). The same principles applied to communications, giving the space for public communication to those who are most intimately connected to their community, is the co-creation of a valid democratic media system. The body-mapping

that took place in Sarnia led to the creation of the Health Center. Workers *emerged* from the participatory project empowered, “it helped to mobilize workers and community members to join in advocating for occupational health services and fair compensation” (Brophy, Keith p. 152). The “institutional occupational health and safety practices largely failed” the workers in Sarnia, but the participatory mapping “proved to be empowering” (Brophy, Keith p. 152). Participatory projects do not impose learning onto people, but rather enable community members to learn and reflect on their own, often resulting in an invigorated community.

By the late 1960’s there was a flourishing of movements implementing radical democratic use of media technology. Documentary filmmaker, Julio Garcia Espinosa, in 1969 helped lay the ground work for community art in his important essay, *For an Imperfect Cinema*:

“What happens if the development of videotape solves the problem of inevitably limited laboratory capacity, if television systems with their potential for “projecting” independently of the central studio render the ad infinitum construction of movie theatres suddenly superfluous? What happens then is not only an act of social justice-the possibility for everyone to make films-but also a fact of extreme importance for artistic culture: the possibility of recovering, without any kind of complexes or guilt feelings, the true meaning of artistic activity.” (Espinosa, 1983, p. 72)

At the time, Espinosa saw the cost of video technology undercutting the cost of film production; he felt this would make visual art affordable and accessible to most communities. For Espinosa, spectators were increasingly taking part in the construction of art.

By equalizing access to the means of artistic production, the privileged title of artist erodes as the public is not pigeonholed into the role of the spectator. Espinosa questioned the privileged title of *artist*: “The task at hand is to ask ourselves whether art

is really an activity restricted to specialists, whether it is, through extra-human design, the option of a chosen few or a possibility for everyone” (Espinosa, p. 75). Increased access to modes of art and communication should inevitably lead to increased participation.

In the same year Herbert Marcuse wrote *An Essay on Liberation* where he envisioned the coming of a time where society is viewed “as a work of art” (Marcuse, 1969, p. 44). He anticipated “a stage where society’s capacity to produce may be akin to the creative capacity of art, and the construction of the world of art akin to the reconstruction of the real world--union of liberating art and liberating technology” (Marcuse, 1969, p. 48). Seldom do the workers of our factories consider their contributions as works of art, rather, to most it is just work. In the act of equalizing access to opportunities for artistic expression we can start to envision a more creative and fulfilling world.

Although this ideal society has yet to actualize itself, we are seeing the seeds of potential. The cost of digital film making has made possible the making of fair quality documentaries that would have previously been impossible. Argentina’s *Urgent Cinema* movement is a present example of a move towards democratic, open and participatory film making.

Urgent Cinema aims to recuperate history from its telling by the corporate media. It is an “artistic insurrection and experimentation to rebuild a brutalized society”. The movement acknowledges that grassroots, participatory, non-commercial standards are not only acceptable, but are the only accessible means to co-creating a democratic grand narrative. (McIntosh, p. 18-29, 2004.)

Another current example of radical democratic use of communication technology is the Zapatista indigenous movement in Mexico which has set an example as to how

communications technology can be poetically used by an oppressed community to voice its struggle with resonance on a global level. Considering Mexico is our other trading partner in NAFTA their struggle is especially relevant to us here in Canada. In 1994, the year NAFTA took effect, they militantly occupied their communities and utilized internet technology to spread their communiqués to the world. Their writings, which were distributed widely over the internet directly attacked the global political organizations that they saw as the root of their local concerns:

[I]t is also outrageous to learn that our national identity has been robbed within the “legal” process of a North American Free Trade agreement which only means freedom for the powerful to rob and the freedom to misery for the dispossessed; it is outrageous now that the one who wears the Presidential sash does not so by popular will but by the will of money and fear” (Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 2004, p. 77)

The awareness that trade policies like NAFTA corrode our national sovereignty and limitlessly exploit our resources is not confined to any locale and we can unite our struggles by sharing our stories on a global level through the tools of communication technology.

The United States army revealed their concern for such ideas by commissioning the Rand corporation to study the Zapatistas use of media; Rand reported that the Zapatistas were conducting “a new mode of conflict-netwar- in which the protagonists depend on using network forms of organization, doctrine, strategy and technology” (Klein, p. 20). Despite the U.S. army’s worries over the Zapatistas’ use of media technology, others have pointed out that the Zapatistas are struggling for democratic changes and the health of their communities and that their use of technology is only a tool to achieve or express these changes, “Do their [the EZLN] demands include a modem and VCR in every *jacal* or adobe hut in Mexico? No” (Nugent, p. 168). In their own words the Zapatistas taught “that which is shame, dignity for human beings and love for

homeland and history” (Marcos, p. 85). We too must not forget that democratic media is only a result of a democratic public, achieved in history through struggle.

The potential for participatory democratic communications is readily available; it is really a matter of transferring these privileges and making them more accessible. Media corporations spend billions of dollars on advertising, spectacular technology, and “talent”. If these funds were even partially accountable to the public our communications would be revolutionized. Unfortunately, it is naive to expect these changes. Instead, hierarchy and domination continue to be maintained by those in control of such technology--with it they shape our history and pacify our communities with endless, often mindless, entertainment. The only option, for those of us who are concerned, is to disseminate and publicize the privileges we can afford in an attempt to reconstitute our communities and our relations with concerned neighbours. If civil society does not take up the task of involving ourselves in the affairs of our own communities, we forfeit our own environments to those who would see our worlds deteriorate rather than promote a sustainable society.

Methodology

I acted as facilitator/director and editor of the film; for the past year I had been photographing and filming the ageing industrial complex that surrounds us, but the film also includes participation from the diverse community members of this region. The film making process was participatory as it encouraged interested community members to contribute to the documentary by submitting their own media, stories, thoughts and research of their own; I also asked for community feed back at various stages of post-production. Participation in the storytelling process by members of the various communities that live in this region is crucial to the balance and connectedness of the film;

in this way, interested citizens became participants rather than spectators of the documentary.

The film also features excerpts from an extended interview with James Laxer, who recently wrote *the Border: Dispatches from the 49th Parallel*, interviews with Occupational Health Worker, James Brophy, Richard Harding, a CAW worker, and a conversation with Sandy Kinart, widow of Blayne Kinart a chemical worker in Sarnia who was stricken with cancer from the workplace.

The dystopic images and sounds of the industrial complex surrounding this region that are seen in the film represent the voices and concerns of our civil society--voices which are often overshadowed by the more awesome spectacle of global consumerism and overwhelming "conservative"⁶ media coverage.

Using these methods I feel I produced a documentary that was participatory and fairly democratic and open to the many communities in these cities.

I also worked closely with Occupational Health Workers Jim Brophy and Margaret Keith who are working on participatory studies of their own. For the past few years, they have met with workers to map their own ailments from the workplace. This occupational body mapping has revealed stark evidence of disease coalescing in industrial workers across the country, but most highly in the communities of Sarnia and Windsor.

Working with others on participatory models across academic fields has been most fulfilling as scholarly disciplinary work rarely occasions such an opportunity.

⁶ By "conservative" I mean media that follows the corporate model of news reporting; ie., hierarchal hiring practices, "expert" opinions, and funded by high priced advertising. This conservative corporate model leaves no room for meaningful public participation in the construction of the news. Workers and citizens are rarely contacted for their views; if they are, their points are edited, concise and lack depth.

Visual Style

The surrounding industrial infrastructure lining our river beds and waterways appears surreal to visitors, but local residents seem habituated to the chaotic noise of the rumbling factories, trucks and trains. A 're-presenting' of these sights and sounds with information and interpretations seldom heard will hopefully spark renewed discussions about the decaying environment that affects us all.

This documentary stylistically tries to capture the aesthetic atmosphere of the region through aerial footage of Detroit and Windsor, drive-by footage, dozens of pictures, newspaper clippings saved and submitted over the past few years, television news clips and sound bites, submitted music, and time lapsed film of our bridges. Interviews provide for pertinent voice-overs and visual breaks.

To capture the multitude of voices, noises, sights and sounds that make up the diverse communities lining these shores the film is edited as a non-linear collage, surreal sequences and sound bites blended to "take advantage of the contradictions of manipulation by posing it as a problem" with the objective of transformation. (Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 152) Taking the sights and sounds of Sarnia and Windsor that are seen on a daily basis, but re-presenting them "not as a lecture, but as a problem" will insinuate that changes need to take place. (Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 109) At the heart of this film "is a basic, almost obsessive dream: namely to persuade or convince freedom of its vocation to autonomy as it travels the road of self-construction, using materials from within and without, but elaborated over and over again. It is with this autonomy, laboriously constructed, that freedom will gradually occupy those spaces previously inhabited by dependency" (Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*, p. 87).

I am also well aware of the fact that this production does not necessarily conform

to the standards of Hollywood or most film theatres, but I feel, as do others, that our tastes in art cannot be defined by the standards of an over-consumptive society. Julio Garcia Espinosa made this argument in *Meditations on Imperfect Cinema...Fifteen Years Later*, written in 1985, "I think that one of the most rigorous means we should use to analyze works of art, in this case of cinema, is the question of up to what point a work of art contributes towards eliminating the culture of waste" (Espinosa, *Meditations on Imperfect Cinema*, p. 85). Working to somehow curb our consumption or the idea that consumption can be limitless has guided this film throughout the production. The repetitive focus on visuals of endless trucks, smoke stacks and oil tanks is intended to become unsettling. It is almost an inescapable world, if it were not for the voices of resistance.

Visual Influences:

Indymedia collectives around the world have produced numerous documentaries, such as *This is What Democracy Looks Like*, which followed the events of the now famous World Trade Organization conference in Seattle. *This is What Democracy Looks Like* was compiled by numerous independent journalists who were filming the protests of the conference. The often amateur looking visuals stand little in the way of the inspiring actions that took place by American citizens to shut the conference down.

The documentary will also draw from the film making style of Erik Gandini's, *Surplus*, which is an excellent example of non-linear, non-focalized, generative film making and also Mark Achbar's *the Corporation*, which is also a film that broadly and boldly approaches a complex topic. Achbar also co-wrote an educational book and travels with the film to self promote and defend his work. Last year, Achbar screened the film in

Windsor and actually ended up sleeping on my floor--this opened my eyes to the glamorous life of documentary film making I am pursuing.

Goals and Distribution

The goal of this film is to connect our community to larger global problems while seeking local solutions potentially resonating with similar communities. I plan to start showing my film at small venues in Windsor and Sarnia. I have already shown a roughcut at *Smogfest* in Windsor to an audience of about fifty people and received a great response to the film. After the screening I gave a short talk about my experiences working with community members and then answered questions from the audience; I was also interviewed by *AM 800*. I have also been asked to show my film in Windsor again in June at a street festival.

A final version of the film will certainly be sent to all those who participated in the film or submitted music. I will also be contacting the CAW and other unions for screenings and I plan to work with Jim Brophy and Margaret Keith on showing the film at a video night at the Health Center. I have connections with *Indymedia* and will contact them to post a link to the video. I intend to get the film into numerous film festivals outside of our communities to show other cities that these industrial centers also concern them and how our relation at the border with the United States is actually physically deteriorating our environments. I hope that places outside of our communities and larger Canadian cities that are not on the border, like Toronto, can appreciate their relation to our communities.

Over the last few years, I have put much effort into the *Windsor Indymedia* website. The *Indymedia* collective's commitment and organization towards social change

have been instrumental in forging a global social movement. I intend to eventually distribute my film through the *Indymedia* network.

Conclusion

I feel that this film really was informed by the theoretical foundations that I have been studying, but at the same time the film is artistic and interesting to watch. Films about community problems often follow a narrative and linear structure that, to me, tends to lack creativity and aesthetic sensibilities. In this day and age, where spectacle and entertainment work to leave the audience mindless, political film making needs to be stimulating, but not to the detriment of content.

Reflecting on the film process, I intended the film to show a fair cross-section of our community and to avoid a focalized topic. A documentary in this area could have easily discussed just the truck problems or the history of cancer in the area; I feel this film was able to avoid such a focus without becoming too generalized or disconnected. Having said this, I did narrow down the film from my original intentions which were to also focus on the militarization and policing of the border as well as more about local resistance to the trends of global capitalism. Given the time constraints, material I had to work with and after discussions with my thesis supervisor I began to realize that the film would be too incoherent and muddled to cover all these topics in under a half an hour. However, I do feel the film shows the importance of peoples' resistance and struggles while still making broad linkages to other communities facing corporate globalization and industrial problems.

I am proud of the work put into this film and think it can help spark some discussion about the problems our communities face. I believe that the more that people in our communities work on projects like this, the more the community becomes involved in the discussion and paths of our futures. Working with members of different communities in two cities has led me to believe that important educational and artistic film

making can take place at relatively low costs. Such access to the means of communications opens up the space for a participatory dialogical democracy, and this is where I plan on putting my energy in the future.

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Appendix I: Itemized Budget

Digital tapes	\$300
Travel costs	\$600
- roundtrip Windsor to Sarnia: \$40 in gas	
- roundtrip Windsor to Detroit: \$15 (border fees)	
- roundtrip Windsor to Ottawa \$200	
Promotional costs (posters, flyers, etc.)	\$200
Mailing costs	\$100
Internet	\$150
Office supplies	\$100
External hard-drive (Maxtor 160 GB)	\$350
Camera memory card (SD 512 MB)	\$120
Video card (computer upgrade, GeForce FX 5600)	\$250
Crew costs	\$400
- travel costs: \$200	
- food: \$100	
- contingency: \$100	
Camera tripod	\$100
Printer/Scanner	\$175
Books/Research Material	\$300
Macintosh G-4 computer	\$2300
Contingency (Emergency rentals, travel, etc.)	\$500
Total:	\$5945

Vita Auctoris

Michael Bernard was born in 1979 in Sarnia, Ontario; he moved to Windsor in 1998 to attend university. He has always had a strong sense of social justice which he attributes to watching Robin Hood movies over and over as a small child.

Michael continues to put his energies into promoting participatory and sustainable communities. He idealistically hopes that this small project will lead to similar, but more grand spectacles of radical community art; ultimately, networking with communities across the globe, united in resistance against corporate global fascism.